UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Leadership in Two Secondary Schools With a Reputation for Success

by

Rosemary Young Foster ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Leadership in Two Secondary Schools With a Reputation for Success* submitted by Rosemary Young Foster in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

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DEDICATION

> *Leadership is essential for modern democratic institutions and societies. Without a broad base of people who think for themselves, engage in public debate about policies, and exercise responsibility for the quality of the life around them, institutions and societies lay themselves open to demagoguery and totalitarian rule. A healthy society will be populated by people exercising leadership at every level and in a broad spectrum of institutions.*
> *Starratt, 1993*

This thesis is dedicated to the students, staff, and parents of Riverview School and Evergreen Community High School who, by "exercising leadership," have provided inspiration and hope for the continuation of a "healthy society."

ABSTRACT

Multiple definitions and competing theories of leadership underpin the current loss of confidence in leadership and the call for new perspectives. The purpose of this study was to present an original perspective on leadership by investigating how leadership was experienced and understood by students, parents, and staff members in two secondary schools that have a reputation for success.

A collective case study approach (Stake, 1995) was adopted for this investigation and two of the twenty-one schools included in the Canadian Education Association's *Exemplary Schools Project* were selected as sites (Gaskell, 1995). Data were gathered over five months from interviews with 18 students, 4 parents, and 19 staff members, as well as from relevant school documents and field observations. The data gathering, analysis, and writing were guided by Lambert et al.'s constructivist conception of leadership (i.e., constructivist leadership is "the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose of schooling) (1995, p. 29).

Categories and themes constructed from the inter-relationship of perceptions of respondents in each school site have been presented in narrative format. Multiple references to the literature have been incorporated throughout this report to further provide for reader interpretation.

The major finding of this study was that staff and students in both school sites regularly experienced, understood, and could communicate their understanding of "constructivist leadership" as defined above. In both school sites, respondents perceived the respectful relationships to be the single most important factor contributing to their leadership experiences. Although all respondents valued and could explain their constructivist leadership experiences, none called the phenomenon

"leadership." Parents did not experience leadership in the same way as staff and students. In one school site, parents looked to school administrators to provide for leadership; in the other, parents adopted their children's views without firsthand experience of the phenomenon.

Recommendations for leadership research and practice are based on this finding and others, including the importance the 41 respondents within these two successful secondary schools ascribed to: (a) a shared philosophy, (b) teacher leadership, and (c) school size.

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It was a tremendous honor to have Dr. Thomas Sergiovanni, distinguished scholar and Radford Professor at Trinity University, as the external examiner. The perspective on secondary school leadership presented in my thesis was inspired by his writing and thinking as well as by the conversations which I have been fortunate enough to have shared with him over the past several years. His thoughtful review of this dissertation and questions contributed to the excitement of the scholarly debate during the final oral examination.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Context of the Study

"Leadership crisis" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978) is a term that has become part of our contemporary language and is indicative of a widespread loss of confidence in leadership in both the public and private sectors. This loss of confidence can be understood within the context of two specific issues identified in the research literature. The most significant of these issues is the ambiguity surrounding the notion of leadership itself, caused by the multiple definitions of the phenomenon. Factors underlying this ambiguity include: the confusion between leadership and management, an elusive understanding of the nature of relationships and influence within organizations, and a lack of consensus about the specific qualities which constitute leadership. After an extensive review of the leadership literature, Bass (1990) concluded that the ambiguity caused by the multiple definitions had given rise to the proliferation of leadership studies since mid-century. The second issue contributing to the current loss of confidence in leadership is the confusion caused by the proliferation of theories and taxonomies that have appeared and that continue to be studied, to compete, and to inform practice even after they have been proven deficient (Rost, 1991).

The state of ambiguity and confusion caused by the definitional diversity and competing theories, claimed Rost, has led to the tendency in both theory and practice to "reduce leadership to good management" (p. 180). The state of confusion and ambiguity within the field of leadership study is further complicated by the current globalization of economies and the pervasive societal changes that have created an environment in which several theorists and critics are calling for new perspectives on the leadership phenomenon (Heifetz, 1994; Immegart, 1988; Rost, 1991; Wheatley, 1992), while others are questioning orthodox assumptions about organization (Capra, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Senge, 1990).

These competing notions of leadership, coupled with the shift in societal values and the preoccupation with economy and accountability, are having a significant impact on the evolution of schooling. The perception that there is a "leadership crisis" (Burns, 1978) within society in general, coupled with the impression that "things are not right at school" (Barlow & Robertson, 1994; Cremin, 1989; Cuban, 1992), underpin the thinking that has generated the most recent education reform initiatives. Sizer (1992) and others (Goodlad, 1997; Merz & Furman, 1997; Wilson & Rossman, 1993; Tyack, 1995) have argued that criticism of the education system is symptomatic of public dissatisfaction with the current state and well-being of society as well as the widespread belief that education reform is a necessary prerequisite to social reform. In order to deal with public perceptions and restore confidence in school leadership, governments in the Western world have responded to social, economic, and political challenges of an evolving post-industrial society (Elkind, 1995) by restructuring, implementing measures for increased accountability, and "mandating excellence" in public schools (Wilson and Rossman, 1993, p. x).

In the present as in the past, educators and policy-makers have targeted secondary schools as they formulate reform strategies in response to the pervasive belief that the education system is not effectively preparing young citizens, "capable of proactively dealing with change throughout life, in a context of dynamic, multicultural global transformation" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4). This belief is evident in reform documents including the Alberta Education's 1997-1998 *Meeting the Challenge IV: Three-Year Business Plan For Education*, and the Ontario Ministry of Education's 1996 discussion paper, *Excellence in Education: High School Reform.*

One way in which the research community has responded to the concern about the current state of secondary education is by investigating the "health and not the pathology of secondary schools" (Gaskell, 1995, p. 14). Several studies have been conducted within secondary schools that have a reputation for success among school members and community members served by the school. There is, as a result, a growing body of literature on successful schools that is informing the on-going dialogue among researchers, educators, and policy-makers (Gaskell, 1995; Lightfoot, 1983; Lee, Bryk & Smith, 1993; Wilson & Corcoran, 1988). After completing an extensive review of the literature on successful secondary schools, Lee, Bryk and Smith (1993) concluded that because of the dichotomy between sociological and anthropological perspectives within this emergent field, leadership, and the issues surrounding secondary school leadership have not yet been fully or directly addressed. Based on their study of 571 successful secondary schools, Wilson and Corcoran (1988) came to a similar conclusion and recommended that "more needs to be known about what type of leadership can create the conditions described by the successful schools' literature and under what circumstances" (p. 13). Clear linkages between leadership and effective organization are as elusive in the successful secondary schools' research as they are in the larger domain of organizational theory (Heifetz, 1994; Immegart, 1988; Rost, 1991; Wheatley, 1992).

Recently, several educational researchers and theorists have argued that it is more appropriate to conceive of schools as "communities," rather than "organizations" when considering models of school leadership with the potential of promoting school improvement (Barth, 1988; Lambert et al., 1995; Sergiovanni, 1996; Starratt, 1996). The "community of leaders" language and thinking first introduced into the education literature by Barth (1988) has had a significant impact on notions and models of school leadership currently favored by policy-makers intent on education reform. Underpinning the widespread implementation of site-based management, school councils, and shared decision-making, for example, is the belief that collaborative leadership modes which involve parents, students, and staff members have the potential of promoting individual and collective growth and development while enhancing possibilities for school improvement (Barth, 1990; Blase & Blase, 1997; Glickman, 1993; Lambert et al., 1995; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995; Schlechty, 1990).

In response to the call for new perspectives on school leadership, Lambert and her colleagues (1995) through the following definition of leadership have linked the "community of leaders" thinking with constructivist assumptions and beliefs about learning:

> Leadership is the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling. (p. 29)

Their conception differs from conventional views in a number of ways: it suggests that leadership transcends "individuals, roles, and behaviors," and therefore any and all school members can engage in leadership; it links leadership to constructivist learning and the "processes of meaning and knowledge construction, participation, and reflection;" and it insists on a context of communal relationships in the development of a "common ground about teaching and learning" within schools (p. 29). Intent on developing a constructivist theory of school leadership, these authors have combined and interpreted assumptions regarding what they have called:

"reciprocal processes," "participation in educational communities," "construction of meaning," and "common purposes about schooling" (p. 29).

The pervasive loss of confidence in leadership within the private and public sectors has given rise to the call for new perspectives that address the growing number of questions concerning orthodox assumptions about both leadership and the organizational context in which it occurs. The study reported in this dissertation was conceived and designed within the context described in the preceding.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate how leadership was experienced and understood by students, parents, and staff members in two secondary schools that have a reputation for success. A secondary purpose of the study was to examine how leadership and culture were intertwined within these schools. This study was undertaken in the spirit of the successful secondary school research, namely to investigate the "health and not the pathology of secondary education" (Gaskell, 1995, p. 14), while further considering the "type of leadership [that] can create the conditions described by the successful schools' literature and under what circumstances" (Wilson & Corcoran, 1988, p. 13). This study was motivated and influenced by my own 20 year career as a high school administrator and teacher who, from 1992 through 1995, was involved in the implementation of mandated education reform initiatives within an Albertan high school that is known among school members and within the community for its "tradition of excellence."

In order to conduct this investigation, I adopted a collective case study approach (Stake, 1995) with the belief that the perceptions of students, staff, and parents were instrumental to learning about leadership in secondary schools that have a reputation for success. Instrumental case study, claimed Stake, is research "on a case to gain understanding of something else" (pp. 3-4). Throughout the data gathering, data analysis, and writing of the case reports, I was guided by Lambert et al.'s (1995) constructivist conception of leadership. My aim through this investigation was in keeping with what Stake (1995) claimed was the final aim of all case study research:

> Case study research shares the burden of clarifying descriptions and sophisticating interpretations. Following a constructivist view of knowledge does not require the researcher to avoid delivering generalizations. But a constructivist view encourages providing readers with good raw material for their own generalizing. The emphasis is on description of things that readers ordinarily pay attention to, particularly places, events, and people, not only

> commonplace description but "thick description," the interpretations of the people most knowledgeable about the case. (p. 102)

Research Questions

The general research question which guided this study was: How do the students, parents, and staff within two secondary schools with a reputation for success experience and understand leadership? The specific research questions which guided this investigation were:

1. How do the students, parents, and staff members within selected secondary schools with a reputation for success perceive the formal organization of the school?
2. How do the students, parents, and staff members within these selected secondary schools perceive the school culture?
3. How do the students, parents, and staff members perceive and experience "routine" (i.e., day-to-day) activities within the school?
4. How do the students, parents, and staff members perceive and experience "non-routine" occurrences (i.e., issues and innovations) within the school?

The specific research questions and the questions comprising the semi-structured interview guides did not include the word "leadership." The decision to exclude this word was made following the pilot study where the word "leadership" was used in interview questions with two of the four respondents who participated in that study. From the respondents' answers, it became evident that when I mentioned the word "leadership" the tendency was to focus on a discussion of "principal leadership," to the exclusion of discussion of other leadership initiatives occurring within the school. Further explanation of the influence of the pilot study upon the design of the research questions and the methodology is included in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Significance of the Study

The theoretical significance of this study can be understood in terms of the call for new perspectives on the leadership phenomenon. Upon completion of his extensive review of the leadership literature, for example, Immegart (1988) called for new perspectives which took into consideration a wide range of organizational qualities. Qualitative inquiry, he concluded, held the most promise for the development of such perspectives (p. 274). Lambert et al. (1996) argued that "new metaphors for school leadership are necessary." Constructivist leadership, these authors believed, "offers many possibilities beyond those we have inherited from the patriarchy" (p. 120). In a similar vein, Sergiovanni (1996) supported his call for new perspectives on school leadership with the claim that "theories of leadership that we now have do not work very well in schools" (p. xix). "A theory for the schoolhouse," he argued, "should provide for decisions about school organization, curriculum and classroom life that reflect constructivist teaching and learning principles" (p. xv). Such a theory, concluded Sergiovanni, begins with new perspectives that are not necessarily all encompassing, but that "encourage us to think differently" (p. xix).

The collective case study reported herein presents a perspective that encourages readers to "think differently" about school leadership by emphasizing the context and processes of leadership, and not individual roles and behaviors within the social hierarchy of secondary schools. The context of leadership presented in each case report in Chapters 4 and 6 comprises respondents' perceptions of the nature of the relationships between and among school members; the processes described in each case underscore the purpose and manner in which respondents constructed meanings and knowledge about individual experiences that occurred within that context.

The perspective presented in this dissertation is not "all encompassing," for case study research conducted within the constructivist paradigm is not undertaken in order to establish universal truths. Findings from the case study, claimed Stake (1995), are different than knowledge from other research traditions, because they are more concrete and resonant with the experience of the reader of the study, because they are more contextual, because they are more developed by reader interpretation, and because they are based more on reference populations determined by the reader. In order to provide the "data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (Stake, 1981, pp. 35-36, cited in Merriam, 1988, pp. 14-15), I have attempted to provide for the readers' vicarious experience by including extensive descriptions and interpretations of the context and processes of leadership in each case. Embedded in these interpretations are references to the literature which have been included in order to provide for further reader interpretation. In this light, the perspective presented in the following chapters has the potential of supporting the development of new perspectives on the leadership phenomenon that are "more informed" and "more sophisticated" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111).

"Knowledge," Stake reminded us, "is socially constructed, and thus case study researchers assist readers in the construction of knowledge" (1994, p. 240). In Chapter 8, conclusions based on the findings of this study are stated as working hypotheses (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 38) which are intended to assist the reader in the construction of his or her own conclusions. Suggestions for further study are made based on these working hypotheses.

The practical significance of this study can best be understood within the present educational context. Given the loss of confidence in educational leadership, the emphasis currently placed on quality and accountability in public education, and the belief that secondary schools require restructuring in order to bring about desired social reform, this study has the potential of informing the practice of educational administration by providing descriptions and examples of leadership in secondary schools that have a reputation for success. In Alberta and Ontario where site-based management and school councils have recently been legislated (Province of Alberta, 1994; Province of Ontario, 1998), for example, this collective case study of leadership could be informative for parents, teachers, principals, students, and community members who are now required to collaborate and share the responsibility of leadership within schools.

Chapter 8 includes a discussion of ways in which the findings and conclusions of this study could inform the practice of educational administration.

Two Key Definitions

In explaining the emergent nature of case study research conducted within the constructivist paradigm, Stake (1995) explained:

> The most distinctive characteristic of qualitative inquiry is its emphasis on interpretation. Clearly, in designing our studies, we qualitative researchers do not confine interpretation to the identification of variables and the development of instruments before data gathering and to analysis and interpretation for the report. Rather, we emphasize placing an interpreter in the field to observe the workings of the case, one who records what is happening but simultaneously examines its meaning and redirects observation to refine or substantiate those meanings. Initial research questions may be modified or even replaced in mid-study by the case researcher. The chief aim is to thoroughly understand the case. . . . Malcolm Parlett and David Hamilton (1976) called it *progressive focusing*. (pp. 8-9)

The following is a brief discussion of the implications that progressive focusing had upon the definition of terms that were central to this study.

Through the search of the literature which I conducted prior to undertaking this study, I became aware of the multiple definitions of leadership that are presently in use in both the popular media, in the research literature, and in practice. In the absence of a consensual definition of the term, I considered several conceptions of the phenomenon that acknowledged the issue of ambiguity and addressed the current call for new perspectives.

Heifetz's (1994) definition of leadership and Sergiovanni's (1994a) definition of "schools as communities" together provided the theoretical frame for the development of the research questions that guided this inquiry during the initial stages of research design, the pilot study, and data collection. The data analysis and writing of the case study reports and the companion chapters to the case studies, however, were guided by Lambert et al.'s (1995) definition which incorporates the notions of "leadership" and "community" within a constructivist framework:

> Leadership is the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling. (p. 29)

Further explanation of the conceptual framework adopted for this investigation is presented at the end of Chapter 2.

The preceding definitions of leadership were crucial in setting the context and parameters for the conduct of this inductive inquiry, but raise the question of the paradox of conceptualization (Kaplan, 1964). Kaplan explained the inherent contradiction in the following way; "proper concepts are needed to formulate good theory, but we need a good theory to arrive at the proper concepts" (p. 63). I undertook this study with the understanding and expectation that my initial conceptualization of the leadership phenomenon would be modified and would evolve as progressive focusing occurred. Further discussion of the progressive focusing that occurred is included in Chapter 9, under the heading "Ontological Authenticity."

The use in this report of the phrase, "secondary schools with a reputation for success," reflects that the schools chosen for the study were two of the twenty-one secondary schools selected from across Canada for inclusion in the 1995 *Canadian Education Association's Exemplary Schools Project* (Gaskell, 1995). Although the selection process and data gathering for the exemplary schools project occurred during the 1993-1994 school year, three years prior to the conduct of this study, the broad criteria for "success" which were employed in the selection of these two schools from among 261 nominations submitted by parents, school, school district, and provincial educators, indicated to me that these schools had achieved their reputation for success over time.

The principals who had been involved when the two schools had originally been identified for inclusion in the *Exemplary Schools Project* were still in each of the two schools and were my initial contacts while I was choosing sites for the study in September 1996. When I inquired about the general state and well-being of each school since the *Exemplary Schools Project* had been conducted, one principal provided the findings of an attitude survey that had recently been completed by a large number of parents, staff and students; the survey had been administered by an external evaluation team. The positive results indicated that school members perceived that their school was "successful." The principal of the second school provided a copy of a recent article included in a prestigious magazine. This article included the positive perceptions of selected parents, staff, students, and community members.

During the data analysis stage of this study, I communicated with the Canadian Education Association's Director of the *Exemplary Schools Project* who, over his years of involvement with the project, had become familiar with the positive reputation of each of the 21 school sites. Through our communication, I learned of the wide range of criteria that had been adopted to initially identify these secondary schools held in high esteem by school and community members. Following my communication with the Director, I chose to use the term, "schools with a reputation for success" in the title of the study rather than "exemplary schools." Please see Appendix A for an overview of the criteria and process employed in the selection of the 21 schools for participation in the 1993-1994 *Exemplary Secondary Schools Project.*

The definitions of the words "reputation" and "success" in the Oxford English Dictionary (1992) are useful in providing one final clarification of my reasons for using the phrase "reputation for success." Reputation is defined as: "What is generally said or believed about a person's or thing's character;" and "Good fame, respectability." Success is defined as: "Person or thing that turns out well;" and "Person or thing that attains the end, prosperous." Through my interviews with various school members in each school site, including the school principals, it became evident to me that each of the two schools was "believed" to be a "respectable" environment where "things turned out well," and where individuals "attained" goals and "prospered."

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into nine chapters. In the preceding chapter, the context, purpose, research questions, and rationale for the significance of the study were presented. Chapter 2 opens with a summary of the initial stage of the literature review which was on-going throughout the study; it closes with the conceptual framework which guided data collection and analysis.

A detailed account of the research design and methodology employed in the conduct of this investigation is presented in Chapter 3. As well, a description of the pilot study and its influence upon the present study are included. Matters related to standards of rigor and ethical consideration are also discussed in the third chapter.

Chapter 4 is the report on the case study of Riverview School. This report of the experiences and perceptions of the 19 staff, student, and parent participants is presented in narrative format and has been organized using headings which correspond to the major categories that emerged during data analysis.

Chapter 5, titled *Riverview School Case Study Companion*, comprises the interpretations of the multiple perspectives included in Chapter 4. These interpretations have been incorporated into a discussion of the context, processes, and underlying tensions of leadership at Riverview School. Embedded in the discussion are references to the literature. Chapter 5 concludes with a presentation of the overarching themes related to participants' experiences and understandings of leadership at Riverview School.

Chapter 6, titled *Evergreen Community High School Case Study Report,* is a narrative account of the experiences and perceptions of the 22 staff, student, and parent participants from that school site. This chapter has been organized under headings which correspond to the major categories that emerged during data analysis.

Chapter 7 includes interpretations based on the Evergreen Community High School case study report. These interpretations have been incorporated into a discussion of the context, processes, and underlying tensions of leadership at Evergreen. References to the research literature are made throughout the discussion. Chapter 7 closes with a presentation of the overarching themes related to the participants' experiences and understandings of leadership at Evergreen.

In Chapter 8, a summary of findings and conclusions which address the research questions and the overall purpose of the study are offered in the form of "working hypotheses" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 38). Recommendations for further research and practice are included in the discussion. The chapter concludes with some final comments on the overarching themes about leadership which emerged from the analysis of both case study reports.

Chapter 9 is a continuation of the discussion of authenticity that begins in Chapters 1 and 3. References and appendices follow this final chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the manner in which the literature review was conducted and to present a survey of the principal areas of that review. A more critical approach to the literature is taken in subsequent chapters where references have been incorporated into the discussion and interpretations made about each of the two cases included in this study. This approach has been adopted in order to reflect the influence of the on-going review of the literature upon the research process, and in order to maximize the opportunity for reader interpretation of each case study.

Three Stages of the Literature Review

Determining the best time to conduct a review of the literature is a matter of debate among experts of qualitative research. In the following, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) have outlined the essence of that debate:

> Some qualitative researchers argue against reviewing the literature until after data collection has begun, for fear that the research will be unduly influenced by the conceptual frameworks, research designs, techniques, and theories of others. (p. 17)

These authors and others (Merriam, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) have argued that although there are concerns, "the benefits of reviewing literature before data collection outweigh the possible harmful effects" (p. 17). Moreover, Glesne and Peshkin concluded, "reviewing the literature is an on-going process that cannot be completed before data collection and analysis" (p. 18). In a similar vein, Glaser (1978) stressed the importance of maintaining an on-going review of the literature when carrying out an inductive investigation:

> One should read for ideas, whether the ideas are in the work or in generating his [her] own ideas. . . . Ideas, of course, make one theoretically sensitive, and the more ideas and the more they connect tend to make the analyst sensitive to what he [she] may discover in his [her] data. (p. 32)

Aware of the concerns raised on both sides of the debate, I assumed a stance similar to that described by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and Glaser (1978) in the passages cited above. The review of the literature was on-going throughout the conduct of this study and occurred in three stages. The first stage was undertaken before and during the preparation of the research proposal. This preliminary search of the literature helped to determine whether the proposed topic was justifiable. As well, the initial search of the literature was useful in focusing the study and in supporting the development of the conceptual framework which guided data collection and analysis. The second stage occurred while data were being collected and analyzed and during the writing of the case study reports and companion chapters to those reports. References to the literature have been incorporated into the interpretations developed within the companion chapters. By incorporating references in this way, the intent was to support individual reader interpretation of each case. The third stage took place during the writing of the final chapters of this dissertation where references to relevant literature were integrated into the discussion of the major findings of this study. Again, by incorporating these references, the intent was to support individual reader interpretation.

This chapter begins with a survey of the research literature pertaining to organizational leadership, educational leadership, and secondary schools. It concludes with a presentation of the conceptual framework which evolved out of the first stage of the review of the literature and which guided data collection and analysis.

Organizational Leadership

The study of educational leadership shares research traditions, theories, and issues with organizational leadership. For this reason, a review of the broad field of leadership study was undertaken in order to contextualize this study. The relevant themes that emerged during this initial search of the literature are presented under the following headings: "Loss of Confidence in Leadership;" Multiple Definitions;" "History of Leadership Study;" "Emerging Perspectives on Leadership;" and "Summary."

Loss of Confidence in Leadership

The "leadership gap" (Zaleznik, 1989) and the "leadership crisis" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) are terms that have entered our contemporary language and are indicative of a growing loss of confidence in leadership during this era where "pervasive social change" has become our reality (Razik & Swanson, 1995, p. 70). Rost (1991) explained this loss of confidence in leadership in terms of the growth in popularity of the notion itself:

> In 1990, *leadership* is a word that has come to mean all things to all people. Even worse, *leadership* has increasingly become a very "hot" word since about 1960, with an ability to produce a passionate reaction that draws people to it through an emotional attraction. Leadership helps Americans find significance in their search for the meaning of life, helps them reconcile the harsh realities of life. The lack of leadership helps them explain ineffectiveness and concomitantly allows them to blame certain people for that ineffectiveness. (pp. 7-8)

In brief, Rost's claim was that the term "leadership" has come to embody the positive expectations that guide people as they set and go about achieving individual and collective goals. When goals are not met, people lose confidence in, and tend to blame those people believed to be responsible for leadership. Schon (1982) made a similar claim when he observed, "we hold our leaders and managers responsible when solutions are not forthcoming" (p. 14).

Increased and broad usage of the term leadership during this period of rapid societal change has contributed to the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the notion and to the sense that there is a "leadership crisis." The urgency of Starratt's (1993) claim underscores the importance attributed to leadership within society as a whole:

> Leadership is essential for modern democratic institutions and societies. Without a broad base of people who think for themselves, engage in public debate about policies, and exercise responsibility for the quality of the life around them, institutions and societies lay themselves open to demagoguery and totalitarian rule. A healthy society will be populated by people exercising leadership at every level and in a broad spectrum of institutions. (p. 14)

The confusion and sense of crisis over the current state of leadership is reflected in the popular media and is further complicated by the multiple definitions and competing theories in the literature.

Multiple Definitions

Bennis and Nanus (1985) in their extensive review of the literature located over 350 different definitions of the term leadership (p. 4). Based on findings from his review of the literature, Bass (1990) contended that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (p. 11). Several analysts have assumed the task of identifying commonalities among the multiple definitions for the purpose of clarifying what is understood by the term leadership. Yukl (1981), for example, made the following observation after completing his analysis of the diverse definitions:

> Definitions of leadership usually have as a common denominator the assumption that it is a group phenomenon involving the interaction between two or more persons. Most definitions reflect the assumption that it involves an influence process. (p. 3)

Yukl's analysis highlights the two assumptions most frequently repeated by others who have undertaken a close examination of the various definitions (Bass, 1990; Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978; Rost, 1991). Although scholars have been successful in identifying common assumptions underlying the multiple definitions of leadership, they have been unable to articulate with certainty or in a consensual way "what leadership is" (Rost, 1991, p. 6).

Ironically, pointed out Rost, there are "almost no arguments about definitions in the literature on leadership" (p. 6). This tendency to accept the "definitional diversity" (p. 135) suggests that there are several factors which support the current use of multiple definitions. Four contributing factors considered here are: (a) the confusion between leadership and management; (b) an elusive understanding of the nature of relationships and influence/power within organizations; (c) the origin and historical significance of the term "leadership;"
(d) popular notions and assumptions about leadership.

Confusion Between Leadership and Management. In support of his criticism of those researchers and scholars whom he believed had not adequately addressed the task of defining leadership, Rost (1991) undertook a close examination of existent leadership studies. From his findings, he calculated that "over 60 percent of the authors" did not even attempt to define the term leadership in their studies (p. 7). Moreover, he found that these same authors tended to reinforce the belief that "leadership is [equivalent to] good management" by using the two terms interchangeably (p. 94). By using the terms "management" and "leadership" to describe similar phenomena, concluded Rost, researchers and scholars were contributing to the ambiguity and confusion which pervades the field of leadership study.

Kotter (1990) argued that leadership and management were two distinct but complementary systems within organizations; management being focused on controlling complexity and leadership on producing change. Common among the arguments presented by Rost (1991) and others (Bass, 1990; Bennis, 1993; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Yukl, 1981; Zaleznick, 1989) who have called for a clearer distinction between management and leadership is the perception that the manner in which individuals interrelate and exert influence on one another is different in organizations that are "managed," than in organizations which are "led" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 218). The interplay between relationships and influence/power was what Yukl (1981) found to be the "common denominator" among the diverse definitions of leadership (p. 3). Specific knowledge about the nature of relationships and the manner in which power and influence were interwoven into those relationships, concluded Yukl, was crucial in defining organizational leadership (p. 269).

Relationships, Influence/Power Within Organization. With the aim of articulating a precise definition of leadership, several scholars and researchers have examined the nature of relationships and influence/power within organizations.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) distinguished between management and leadership as they described the nature of relationships and influence/power within organizations. These authors asserted that management focused on using power to create and maintain a hierarchy of relationships for the purpose of contractual exchanges. On the other hand, these authors argued, leadership was "the wise use of power" in order to empower others to set and achieve common goals (p. 17).

To emphasize the distinction, Bennis and Nanus compared managers and leaders and their use of influence/power within their relationships with others. Managers, they contended, interacted with workers to negotiate contractual exchanges and exercised the power required to get things done. Workers were in this way subordinate to the goals of the organization and were motivated to comply with the wishes of management by the rewards which they received in exchange for their work. Managers, in these authors' view, were those who "got the work done" by gaining the compliance of subordinates and maintaining the status quo (p. 23). In comparison, these authors stated, leaders empowered employees through their creation of vision and "wise" use of power, where power was the "basic energy needed to initiate and sustain action, . . . the capacity to translate intention into reality and sustain it" (p. 17). According to Bennis and Nanus, the power of initiating and directing within the organization was left to the discriminating and "wise" leader who established the intent and purposes for the exercise of power.

The following passage, through its juxtaposition of the two notions, highlights what Bennis and Nanus believed to be the differences in the nature of relationships and power/influence in organizations where either leadership or management prevailed:

> Leadership stands in the same relationship to empowerment that management does to compliance. The former encourages a 'culture of pride,' while the latter suffers from the 'I only work here' syndrome.
> (p. 218)

Burns (1978), in his seminal work on leadership, also focused on the role of influence/power in relationships between individuals to whom he referred as "leaders" and "followers." Using Maslow's theory of needs, Burns described leaders as self-actualizers who learned "to lead by being led," and who modeled continuous learning for followers (p. 117). The following passage illustrates the transformative process Burns believed occurred in relationships between leaders and followers:

> It is their capacity to learn from others and from the environment--the capacity to be taught. That capacity calls for an ability to listen and be guided by others without being threatened by them. It is this kind of self-actualization that enables leaders to comprehend the needs of potential followers, to enter into their perspectives, and to act on popular needs such as those for material help and for security and esteem. Because leaders are themselves continually going through self-actualization processes, they are able to rise with their followers, usually one step ahead of them, to respond to their transformed needs and thus to help followers move into self-actualization processes. Leaders help transform followers' needs into positive hopes and aspirations.
> (p. 117)

Burns' definition of leadership emphasized the influence exercised by leaders in their relationships with followers whom, he believed, were similarly guided by civic and moral intent (p. 32). "Power," he concluded, "is a relationship among people. . . . Power and leadership become part of a system of social causation" (p. 13). In his view of leadership, Yukl (1989) also focused on the role of influence/power within relationships between individuals to whom he referred as leaders and followers. He defined influence as a "process whereby attitudes, perceptions and/or behavior [of followers] are affected" by three sources of leadership [exercised by the leader]--"position, personal, and political" (p. 45).

In his effort to clarify the notion of leadership, Bass (1990) critiqued conceptions including the transformative models discussed above, claiming that the tendency when defining leadership was to focus on the traits and behaviors of individuals who lead rather than on the action of leading (p. 228). If influence/power within organizations is viewed as a process that occurs when leaders take charge of directing relationships with followers, he argued, leaders' actions are indistinguishable from managers' focused on "getting the work done through others"

(p. 414). Rost (1991) argued that a precise understanding of the nature of relationships and the exercise of power and influence within organization continued to be elusive for two principal reasons: (1) There is still no clear distinction between the notions of management and leadership, and manager and leader. (2) There is a tendency to equate the actions of leading and managing with the individuals designated "leaders" and "managers." The terms management and manager, and leadership and leader are often used interchangeably in popular media and scholarly publications.

An examination of the origin and historical significance of the term "leadership" explains in part the confusion between the notions "leader" and "leadership" as well as the tendency to use these terms interchangeably .

Origin and Historical Significance of the Term "Leadership." The word leadership is a relatively modern term which did not appear in the English language "until the first half of the nineteenth century in writings about the political influence and control of British Parliament." The word leader, from which leadership derived, however, appeared as early as 1300 A.D. (Bass, 1990, p. 11). Bass credited Plato with the development of the first typology of leadership, a typology which included such leader archetypes as philosopher-statesman, military commander, and businessman-entrepreneur. Critical of the tradition that began with this early contribution, Bass argued that the proliferation of typologies that had appeared since the time of Plato presented an obstacle to scholars attempting to define leadership. Typologies focused on the traits and behaviors of different kinds of leaders were "easy to discuss, comprehend, and remember," but in Bass' view "lacked rigor" (p. 21). In an attempt to explain the impact of this tradition begun by Plato, Bass (1990) elaborated:

> The study of leadership rivals in age the emergence of civilization which shaped its leaders as much as it was shaped by them. From its infancy, the study of history has been the study of leaders. Purposeful stories have been told through the generations about leaders' competencies, ambitions, and shortcomings; leaders' rights and privileges; and the leaders' duties and obligations. (p. 3)

The "purposeful stories" linking the history of leaders to the evolution of Western civilization have had a significant impact on the way leadership is conceptualized. The cultural entrenchment of these stories about leaders suggests why scholars, like lay people, have tended to concentrate on the individuals who lead when discussing leadership.

Significant as well, is that the appearance of the term leader in the English language pre-dates by several centuries the appearance of the more abstract term leadership. This linguistic evolution illustrates the shift that has occurred over time from an emphasis on the individual who leads to the action of leading. As recognizable and popular as the concept of leadership is in our contemporary world, an equivalent for the English word leadership has not appeared in all modern languages (Rost, 1991, p. 38). In French, for example, where there is no real equivalent, the tendency has been to use the English word in contexts that call for a distinction between what are typically considered management and leadership functions.

The relatively recent appearance of the word "leadership" in English, coupled with the historical tradition of telling purposeful stories about individuals who resemble well-known leader archetypes complicate the task of defining leadership.

Popular Notions and Assumptions About Leadership. Several theorists and scholars, as was previously stated, have written about the impact of popular usage of the term "leadership" upon scholarly attempts to define the notion (Rost, 1991; Schon, 1982). The increased and broad usage of the term in our contemporary language, claimed Rost (1991), has given rise to the "mythological significance" attributed to leadership within our contemporary society (p. 7). When unrealistic expectations are not met, the tendency has been to blame those believed to be responsible for leadership. Senge (1990), like Rost (1991) and Schon (1982), critiqued popular notions of leadership:

> Our traditional view of leaders--as special people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize the troops--are deeply rooted in an individualistic and nonsystematic world view. At its heart, the traditional view of leadership is based on assumptions of people's powerlessness, their lack of personal vision and inability to master the forces of change, deficits which can be remedied only by a few great leaders. (p. 340)

In the absence of "great leaders" to remedy "deficits" and "master the forces of change," claimed Senge (1990), people feel powerless and seek alternative ways to manage the complexities of the human experience. Nelson and Quick (1994) observed that:

> These alternatives, or substitutes for leadership, are complementary or supplementary sources of guidance and good feelings for followers. Task substitutes for leadership include unambiguous, routine work. Organizational substitutes for task-oriented behavior include formal rules, regulations, and procedures. Organizational substitutes for relationship-oriented behavior include a closely knit, cohesive work group. (p. 360)

In spite of numerous scholarly attempts to address the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the notion of leadership, the multiple definitions persist as do the factors contributing to the definitional diversity. Within the research community, there are those who contend "the issue of defining leadership is central to the problems both scholars and practitioners have had with conceptualizing and practicing leadership" (Rost, 1991, p. 37). Others have argued "the definition of leadership should depend on the purposes to be served by the definition" (Bass, 1990, p. 20). The tendency to accept the "definitional diversity" with "no argument" has had a significant impact on the history of leadership study including a proliferation of theories and taxonomies.

History of Leadership Study

The study of history, claimed Bass (1990) "has been the study of leaders" (p. 3). It was not until the twentieth century, however, that empirical research on leadership as distinct from the study of leaders began (p. 55). Since the early 1900s, there have been "literally thousands of empirical investigations" of leadership (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 4), but few models and no one theory of the leadership phenomenon have dominated the study or practice of leadership for any length of time (Bass, 1990, p. 35). "In terms of academic and practical efficacy," pointed out Razik and Swanson (1995), "theories of leadership endure for about twenty years. When research uncovers deficiencies in the theories, new perspectives for studying leadership are identified" (p. 37). Adding to the confusion caused by the rapid succession of new perspectives is the tendency to retain deficient theories. Rost (1991) explained the effect:

> The facts are that any one theory did not unduly dominate any decade to the exclusion of other theories. The theories did not run riot in any one separate time period, nor did they disappear from the picture when the next so-called dominant theory appeared on the scene. Once the theories gained a certain currency, they remained in the literature, and they continue to remain there. The theories also remained in the behavioral habits of practitioners who continued to put the theories into practice long after they were discredited by researchers. (p. 28)

The following discussion includes an overview of the brief but prolific history of leadership study and a summary of the theories that continue to compete, continue to be studied, and continue to inform practice.

Competing Theories. The discussion of competing theories is organized under the following headings: "Leadership style theories," "Contingency/situational leadership theories," "Transformational leadership theories," and the "New generation of leadership theories." The first two headings describe categories that have a longer tradition than the last two and reflect rational-technical assumptions about organization. Management principles based on productivity are incorporated into these views and leadership is associated with hierarchical position within the social structure of the organization. Traits and behaviors of designated leaders within the hierarchy are central to theories in both categories (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995, p. 227).

The third category, transformational leadership theory, was called the "new paradigm" when it first appeared in the late 1970s and as it evolved in the 1980s and 1990s (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995, p. 254). Transformational leadership theory adopts a human resource orientation rather than rational-technical assumptions (Bolman & Deal, 1991, cited in Razik & Swanson, 1995, p. 296). The fourth category, referred to as the "new generation" of leadership theories "probe the substance of leadership," namely, "the 'stuff' that leaders deal with" (Starratt, 1993, p. 4).

Leadership style theories. Common to leadership style theories, are hierarchical notions of institutional authority as well as an emphasis on productivity. To study leadership style, claimed Razik and Swanson (1995) is to investigate "the pattern of behaviors of a person who assumes or is designated to a position of influence in an organization" (p. 49). Lewin's (1935) early research on leadership style led to the identification of three basic styles: (1) Autocratic style describes the leader who uses strong, directive, controlling actions to enforce rules, regulations, activities, and relationships within the organization. (2) Democratic style describes the leader who takes collaborative, reciprocal interactive actions with followers concerning decision-making, goal setting, and productivity. (3) Laissez-faire style describes the leader who abdicates the institutional authority and designated responsibility of the position. Together these styles comprise a typology to which scholars and practitioners often refer when describing traits and behaviors of designated leaders (Nelson & Quick, 1994, p. 366).

Early theories defined and categorized leadership styles according to the ways in which leaders viewed workers' motivation, actions, and productivity. Douglas McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Theory Y placed designated leaders' views of workers on a continuum. On one extreme was Theory X based on the assumption that individuals required direction and control in accomplishing organizational goals. On the other end of the continuum was Theory Y which assumed that individual and organizational goals could be integrated and when they were, individuals became self-motivated and self-directed (Razik & Swanson, 1995, p. 50). In 1981, Ouchi developed Theory Z which combined elements of McGregor's' Theory X and Y along with behavioral assumptions:

> Theory Z provides different strategies and perspectives for organizing human effort focusing on consensual decision making and a team approach to organizational processes and change. Unlike Theory X and Theory Y, which define the leadership style of a superior or leader, Theory Z defines the leader's style according to his [her] ability to create an organizational culture where open communication, trust, and commitment to organizational goals is fostered. (p. 66)

Ouchi's Theory Z reflected democratic values and emphasized the leader's responsibility in adjusting his or her style, strategies, and goals in response to workers' maturity and behavior. Likert (1967) proposed a four style management system which incorporated many of the concepts associated with Theories X and Y. Likert's model, like Ouchi's Theory Z, however, emphasized the importance of the workers' behavior in determining leader behavior and goals (Razik & Swanson, 1995, p. 50).

Situational/contingency leadership theories. These theories have gone beyond theories on leadership style by taking into consideration situational variables and their collective impact upon the style of designated leaders. Fiedler's (1974) contingency theory was the first to assume that organizational effectiveness was determined in part by the appropriateness of the fit between leadership style and the situation in which it took place. Fiedler's claim was that leaders were either task-oriented or relationship-oriented and that factors within the situation more or less favored the effectiveness of each style. His research comprised the first attempt to link the effectiveness of leadership to situational variables such as the nature of tasks and relationships between co-workers. Fiedler hypothesized that leaders could improve their effectiveness by modifying situations to better fit their leadership style.

More recently, situational/contingency theorists (Hersey 1984; Vroom & Yetton, 1973) have argued that "a leader should adjust his or her behavior to the situation and should appreciate diversity among followers" (Nelson & Quick, 1994, p. 381).

Because of the on-going influence of situational/contingency theories, terms such as "group maturity," "task-oriented behavior," and "relationship-oriented behavior" have become a part of the lexicons of both management and leadership theory. Although situational/contingency theories and models have been widely accepted in practice, several scholars have remained skeptical. Hersey and Blanchard's (Hersey, 1984) situational leadership theory, for example, has been criticized for its weak conceptual base and inadequate testing (Yukl, 1989, pp. 140-144). With the growing complexity of work situations, situational/contingency theorists have started to look at ways to "integrate leadership research strategies--traits, behaviors, contingencies, and situational determinants--into one model" (Razik & Swanson, 1995 p. 56).

Transformational leadership theories. In his seminal work, Burns claimed "we know all too much about our leaders, we know far too little about *leadership*. We fail to grasp the essence of leadership that is relevant to the modern age" (p. 1). Burns distinguished between management and leadership by referring to management functions as "transactional leadership" and to leadership functions as "transformational leadership." By situating transactional and transformational leadership at opposite ends of a continuum, Burns drew attention away from individuals and focused it on the act of leading, and the crucial questions surrounding the interplay between leaders and followers, and power and influence.

Burns' definition of transformational leadership was: "When one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (1978, p. 20). His definition was unique in the way that it emphasized the importance of developing relationships that were not necessarily restricted by designated roles and authority within the bureaucratic hierarchy of organizations. He contended that "the transformational leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher order needs, and engages the whole person of the follower" (p. 4). Burns believed that "authentic leadership is a collective process. . . it emerges from the clash and congruence of motives and goals of leaders and followers" (p. 382). Burns' writing highlighted the centrality of relationships and the non-coercive use of influence/power that occurred when leaders and followers were motivated by moral purposes.

Since the appearance of Burns' work *Leadership* in 1978, others have constructed transformational models of leadership (Bass, 1985; Bennis, 1993; Bennis & Nanus, 1983; Rost, 1991). These conceptions are all similar in that leaders and followers are depicted as collaborators in determining and pursuing communal interests beyond individual interests; influence is "multi-dimensional and non-coercive" (Rost, 1991, p. 105). Motivating such collective action are democratic, or "large values such as freedom, community, equity, justice, brotherhood" (Starratt, 1993). The theories which have developed out of, and around Burns' concept are revolutionary in the manner that they reflect changing attitudes and societal norms.

"New generation" of leadership theories. Starratt (1993) in his analysis of the leadership literature referred to a "new generation" of leadership study which has emerged since the appearance of Burns' (1978) work. His claim was that the current generation of theorists have "moved away from the positivist, reductionist, behaviorism of the previous generation toward a more descriptive, naturalistic phenomenology of leaders in action," where "in-depth interviews and organizational narratives tend to substitute for survey questionnaires and statistical analysis" (p. 5). Research focusing on what Starratt has called the "substance of leadership" has supported the development of cultural (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1992), symbolic (Gardner, 1990), charismatic (Bennis & Nanus, 1985), and visionary leadership (Nanus, 1992).

Emerging Perspectives On Leadership

The current situation where leadership theories continue to compete and inform practice even as new perspectives emerge has led some theorists to contend that the brief but prolific history of leadership study is simultaneously the cause and effect of the definitional diversity within the field. Immegart (1988), for example, after completing his review of the leadership literature, concluded that "there is very little of what could really be called leadership theory to guide inquiry" and that to date, only a "broad conceptualization" of the leadership phenomenon was possible (pp. 272-274). Claiming that "improved conceptualizations of leadership" were needed in order to advance inquiry and the understanding of leadership, Immegart argued that it was time to stop "theorizing about leadership," and "time to move on to the investigation of *leading* rather than *leadership*" (p. 273). To investigate *leading* and develop conceptualizations that presented more than general theorizing about leadership, he claimed, more extensive use of case studies and other methodologies from the naturalistic paradigm was required (p. 274).

Others have also called for new perspectives which take into account the broad range of qualities comprising leadership. Arguing that the current state of confusion within the field of leadership study is symptomatic of pervasive social change, Rost (1991) criticized "the efforts of leadership scholars and practitioners in the twentieth century," for their tendency to assume the "values and cultural norms of the industrial paradigm" when investigating the phenomenon (p. xiv). This tendency, contended Rost, had given rise to the dominant rational-technical view of organization, where management was preeminent, where goal achievement was the overarching objective, and where leadership was individualistic, personalistic and focused on designated leaders (p. 180). He concluded that the present loss of confidence in leadership within the public and private sectors had been precipitated by the shift in social values and norms coupled with an out-dated view of organization. Rost advocated that future leadership study should take into account changing norms and the value society placed on "collaboration, common good, global concern, diversity and pluralism, client orientation, civic virtues, freedom of expression, qualitative language and methodologies, substantive justice, and consensus-oriented policy-making processes" (p. 181). "Leadership," claimed Rost, "is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102).

During this period of pervasive societal change, others have begun to question orthodox assumptions about organization, the context of leadership (Capra, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 1992). Morgan (1997), for example, in his argument that theory is metaphor, presented a compelling case for the strength of developing multiple perspectives on organization:

> In recognizing theory as metaphor, we quickly appreciate that no single theory will ever give us a perfect or all purpose point of view. We realize that the challenge is to become skilled in the art of using metaphor: to find fresh ways of seeing, understanding and shaping the situations that we want to organize and manage. . . 'Collectively, they [perspectives] demonstrate how we can use metaphor to generate a range of complementary and competing insights and learn to build on the strengths of different points of view. '(pp. 5-6)

In his widely read book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge (1990) introduced the concept of the "learning organization." Influenced by the work of Argyris and Schon (1978), Senge predicted that future leaders would focus their energies on facilitating the continuous adaptation or "learning" of those who inhabit organizations. The notion of self-renewing organizations has become a popular one in both business and education (Fullan, 1993; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Senge's perspective on leadership is based on the centrality of relationships between leaders and followers and the ability of designated leaders to engage followers in setting and achieving organizational goals:

> The new view of leadership in learning organizations centers on subtler and more important tasks. In learning organizations, leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers. They are responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models--that is, they are responsible for learning. (p. 340)

In recent years, Fritjof Capra (1975; 1991; 1996) has argued that organizations are human communities and as such share biological principles with all other living systems. Capra (1996) has incorporated an extensive discussion of these principles (i.e., interdependence, sustainability, partnerships, flexibility, diversity) into his presentation of what he has called the ecological paradigm (pp. 297-304). Citing Kuhn (1962), Bateson (1972), Roszak (1994), and Varela (1981), among others, Capra has presented a compelling argument for replacing the dominant rational-technical view of organizations as "machines" with an ecological and holistic view of organizations as living social systems, characterized by the constantly changing network of relationships among those who inhabit them (p. 5). Capra's view, like Morgan's (1997) brain metaphor, depicts the complex network of relationships, simultaneously ordered and chaotic, which comprise social organizations.

Although Capra does not include a discussion of leadership, others from the social sciences (Lambert et al., 1995; Wheatley, 1992) have adapted his thinking on organization in developing their perspectives on leadership. Wheatley, for example, argued:

> Our concept of organizations is moving away from the mechanistic creation that flourished in the age of bureaucracy. We have begun to speak in earnest of more fluid, organic structures, even of boundaryless organizations. We are beginning to recognize organizations as systems, construing them as "learning organizations" and crediting them with some type of self-renewing capacity. (p. 13)

In presenting her perspective, Wheatley contended that leadership had to be examined for its relational aspects. Furthermore, she claimed:

> Ethical and moral questions are no longer fuzzy religious concepts but key elements in our relationships with staff, suppliers, and stakeholders. If the physics of our universe is revealing the primacy of relationships, is it any wonder that we are beginning to reconfigure our ideas about management in relational terms? (p. 12)

Summary

Pervasive societal changes, increased and broad usage of the term leadership, and the multiple definitions and competing theories within the field of leadership study and practice, together contribute to the ambiguity which surrounds the notion of leadership. Within the public and private sectors, this confusion coupled with often unrealistic expectations of leadership underpin the sense that there is currently a "leadership crisis" within society. Within the research community, the ambiguity and confusion in the leadership literature have prompted scholars to call for new perspectives on leadership. Several perspectives are emerging and include conceptions of leadership as relational, comprised of the interactive processes that occur among organizational members. As well, there are conceptions where assumptions about the organizational context of leadership are being questioned.

Educational Leadership

Themes similar to those found in the organizational leadership literature emerged from the initial review of the educational leadership literature. For the purposes of clarity and coherence, the following discussion is organized according to headings similar to those used in the previous section of this chapter. These headings are: "Confidence Crisis in Educational and School Leadership;" "Multiple Definitions of School Leadership;" "Competing Theories;" "Emerging Perspectives on School Leadership;" and "Summary."

Confidence Crisis in Educational and School Leadership

Educational leadership is also undergoing a "confidence crisis" during this current era of unprecedented social change (Barth, 1990, Cremin, 1989; Cuban, 1992). Many throughout the Western world, for example, are questioning whether school systems can support the development of young citizens "capable of proactively dealing with change throughout life, in a context of dynamic multicultural global transformation" (Fullan, 1993, p. 4). Holdaway and Ratsoy (1991) outlined changes and conditions affecting schools:

> A number of well-known relevant societal changes appear to be universal in western countries, including the drive for better treatment of women and minorities, an increase in the proportion of marriage breakdowns, more equity in personnel practices for all employees, demands for greater accountability of politicians and administrators, rapid technological developments, changing demographic patterns, greater awareness of environmental issues, more emphasis upon ethical practices, and greater involvement of the courts in resolving disputes. Two other societal conditions are having direct or indirect effects on schools: greater use of alcohol and drugs by a substantial proportion of the population, including school students, and the spread of AIDS. (p. 1)

Anson (1992) highlighted public expectations of leadership in restoring lost confidence in the education system during the current era of rapid change:

> Leadership is recognized as a critical process for changing education and is given equal weight with studies of the content of new approaches to schooling. Education is frequently cited as the avenue to assuring our strength and well-being as a society. As the pace of change increases and the demands on the education system increase, the burden to respond to those demands will fall on the shoulders of our education leaders. (p. 303).

As in the broad field of organizational leadership, the tendency within education has been to blame those people believed to be responsible for leadership when solutions are not forthcoming (Smith & Piele, 1989). With the "growing acceptance that education cannot be left to the experts," Western governments through their reform initiatives have attempted to reverse the erosion of trust between those "who provide the education service and those who use it," by assuming responsibility for educational leadership and by mandating the reform of school systems (Lewington & Orpwood, 1993, p. 163).

Pervasive societal changes, a loss of confidence in educational leaders, and the widespread belief that education reform is a necessary prerequisite to social reform have together given rise to the recent call for new perspectives on educational and school leadership. As within the larger field of organizational leadership study, however, the ambiguity which surrounds the notions of educational and school leadership makes the task of developing such perspectives more difficult. Anson (1992) elaborated on the impact of the confusion within the larger field upon the study of educational and school leadership:

> The field of leadership research poses particular problems because of the lack of consensus about the nature of leadership due to both the developmental stage of the research and the changing nature of leadership itself. Because there is still much to understand about what leadership means, it is difficult to generate solid, usable research that will both respond to forces affecting education and provide guidance to manage change in the education system itself. (p. 303)

Specifically, the task of generating "solid, usable research" which supports explications of the "forces affecting education" and provides "guidance" in changing the "education system" has been complicated by the multiple definitions and theories of school leadership that continue to compete and inform both research and practice.

Multiple Definitions of School Leadership

In spite of scholarly attempts to address the ambiguity caused by the multiple definitions of school leadership, numerous definitions persist for reasons similar to those outlined in the foregoing discussion of organizational leadership. Four factors contributing to the definitional diversity within the field of school leadership study and practice are:

1. There is confusion between leadership and management and the tendency to equate school leadership with "good" management. Education reform documents, for example, encourage the use of management terms and promote the image of schools as businesses requiring managerial attention and action (i.e., *Alberta Education's Three Year Business Plan for Education* (1997), *Ontario Ministry of Education's Excellence in Education: High School Reform* (1996). Recent government attempts to restructure the education system from outside schools have given rise to what scholars have called a "leadership dilemma" (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995) and "leadership paradox" (Deal & Peterson, 1994) within schools. Responding to the government's mandate for change, claimed Deal and Peterson, calls for school "principals who are bifocal, who can combine managerial tasks with symbolic sensitivity and passion, who are simultaneously efficient managers and effective leaders" (p. xii).

2. There is an elusive understanding of the nature of relationships and influence/power within schools. Traditional views of schooling prevail as do hierarchical relationships between teachers, students, and administrators. Power/influence tend to be distributed according to position within the school hierarchy (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 6). In spite of recent attempts to democratize

schools by introducing governance models based on shared power/influence, claimed Glickman (1993), schools remain the least democratic of institutions.

3. There is confusion between "leader" and "leadership" and a tendency to use the two terms interchangeably. Northfield (1992) articulated this tendency when he stated that "expectations to do with leadership focus on the principal" (p. 97).

4. Popular notions and assumptions influence the way in which lay people and scholars conceptualize leadership. Definitions for school leadership are imported from business, professional sports, and other organizations and affect public perceptions and expectations of schools (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. viii). Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) explained the impact of popular notions and assumptions upon the study of school leadership:

> But, we do have a worry. That worry is fueled by the well-known tendency for educational innovation to be faddish, often to be fatally simplistic in what is selected for implementation, and frequently to assume the existence of a "silver bullet"--one simple solution to a complex network of problems. (p. 254)

Within the research community, the debate over defining school leadership continues. The definitional diversity has had a significant impact on the history of school leadership study. It is a history which parallels the brief but prolific tradition of leadership study presented in the preceding discussion of organizational leadership.

Competing Theories

The following begins with a brief discussion of theories which continue to compete and inform the study and practice of school leadership. Two school leadership models that have evolved during the current era of education reform are discussed under separate headings.

Leadership Style Theories. As was previously stated, common to leadership style theories are hierarchical notions of institutional authority as well as an emphasis on productivity. The rational-technical assumptions underpinning leadership style theories are akin to those underlying the traditional and prevailing view of schools as hierarchical organizations within a larger bureaucratic system (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 5). Using Likert's (1967) typology of leadership styles, school leadership within this traditional frame is generally autocratic in nature, with power/influence being amassed at the top of the hierarchy and "the responsibility for leadership [being placed] on the incumbents of administrative offices" (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995, p. 241). The assumption underlying this view is that "hierarchy equals expertise. Those higher in the hierarchy are presumed to know more about teaching, learning, and other matters of schooling than those lower in the hierarchy" (Sergiovanni, 1994b, p. 216). Lambert et al. (1995) explained why traditional views of schooling prevail and why the study of school leadership most often remains focused on the leadership style of the principal:

> Traditional schools provide for continuity and assure parents an education for their children that is similar to the one they themselves experienced in school. . . . In traditional schools, lines of authority are usually clear, with the principal functioning as the decision-maker, policy-setter, and task-master. . . Notions of leadership are influenced by scientific management theory, with emphasis on efficiency and quality control. (pp. 5-6)

School principals are often described or self-described according to their autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire style. Behavioral assumptions are frequently incorporated into the study of leadership style within schools. The principal, the individual occupying the highest position within the social hierarchy, is believed to be able to shape human behavior by implementing a series of rewards and sanctions in order to achieve organizational goals.

Situational/Contingency Leadership Theories. Central to this category of theories is a focus on the traits and behaviors, the leadership style, of designated leaders within the hierarchy of the organization. This group of theories, based on rational-technical assumptions, goes beyond leadership style theories by assuming that organizational productivity is determined in part by the appropriateness of the fit between leadership style and the situation in which it takes place. Leadership style is differentiated based on the maturity level or work style of the employee. In terms of school leadership, teacher supervision by principals has as its aim to move teachers to higher levels of performance. Lambert et al. (1995) explained the underlying assumptions of situational/contingency leadership theories:

> That teacher capacity is fixed; that the leader's role is to learn to deal with the different abilities of teachers and manage them successfully; that teachers will naturally sort themselves into high-, average-, and low-performing groups, much like students. Hersey and Blanchard's (1972) situational leadership suggests that leaders need to be flexible in their approach to employee supervision, but it also suggests that employees can be easily categorized and that an appropriate 'treatment' exists for each category of behavior. (p. 12)

The on-going influence of situational/contingency theories is apparent in some of the language frequently used to describe the school principal (e.g., a "people-person," a "change agent," a "problem-solver," a "crisis manager," a "maintenance wo/man").

Transformational Leadership Theories. Leadership style and situational/contingency theories continue to be studied and continue to inform practice, but have been subsumed in part by school leadership theories and models that have appeared with the onset of the current era of education reform. Collectively, these theories and models have been called the "new paradigm of leadership" and have been influenced by Burns' (1978) theory of transformational leadership (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995, p. 253). Leithwood and Steinbach, based on their recent studies of school leadership, put forth this contention:

> There is strong empirical evidence to suggest that transformational leadership fosters many of the changes apparently required to accomplish the purposes of a total quality organization. Total quality organizations and transformational leadership, while concepts developed in non-educational organizations, are of increasing interest to those attempting to restructure schools. (p. 254)

"New Generation" of Leadership Theories. The "new generation" of leadership study (Starratt, 1993) which has emerged since the appearance of Burns' (1978) work has given rise to research within the field of education which has moved away from rational-technical assumptions to focus on to what Starratt referred as the "substance of leadership" (p. 5). Educational theorists and scholars have developed conceptions which include cultural (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Deal & Peterson, 1994; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995) and moral dimensions of school leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992a, 1992b).

Bolman and Deal (1994), based on the summary report of a forum attended by leadership and educational scholars, claimed that the challenges presented by pervasive societal changes "are not going to be met by schools, or any other organization if they continue to replay and recycle approaches to leadership that beg the personal, political, and cultural issues that are at the heart of the leadership question" (p. 94). Using Bolman and Deal's findings, Ogawa and Bossert (1995) proposed changing the "dominant rational-technical perspective of schools," to one which was "largely cultural" (p. 239). Leadership, they contended, was an

> organizational quality which flows through the networks of roles that comprise organizations. The medium of leadership and the currency of leadership lie in the personal resources of people. Leadership shapes the

> systems that produce patterns of interaction and the meanings that other participants attach to organizational events. (p. 224)

In his presentation of a model for "moral leadership," Sergiovanni (1992b) also challenged the dominant rational-technical perspective of schools, claiming that different perceptions of reality, what he called "mindscapes," could lead people to behave quite differently. He proposed a dynamic model for school leadership where the head (i.e., school leader's perception of reality) is shaped by the heart (i.e., school leader's values and beliefs) and drives the hand (i.e., school leader's decisions, actions and behaviors); "in turn, reflections on decisions and actions [continuously] affirm or reshape the heart and the head" (pp. 7-8).

Instructional Leadership. Instructional leadership models evolved out of the assumptions and concerns underlying what has become known as the first wave of reform, a period which produced the effective schools movement (Beare & Boyd, 1993, p. 4). In North America, the flurry of legislation supported by private and populist in-put comprising this initial call for reform, was precipitated by the appearance in 1983 of the American National Commission on Excellence in Education's summary report, "A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for School Reform." In announcing that the United States' "unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation" was being "overtaken by competitors throughout the world," this national report "galvanized public opinion to the need for reform in America's schools" (Jacobson & Conway, 1990, p. 7).

Instructional leadership, particularly on the part of the principal, was linked to student achievement and school improvement within the effective schools literature which has come to embody the spirit of this first wave of reform. The principal was believed to be able to provide instructional leadership by monitoring student progress, serving as a visible presence within the school, observing in classrooms, participating in staff development, and providing resources for teachers (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 7). The effective schools thinking continues to inform the practice of school leadership. Section 15 of the Province of *Alberta School Act* (Province of Alberta, 1996), for example, uses the language of the effective schools' literature in order to delineate the legal responsibilities of the school principal:

> A principal of a school must (a) provide instructional leadership in the school; (b) ensure that the instruction provided by the teachers employed in the school is consistent with the courses of study and education programs prescribed, approved or authorized pursuant to this Act; (c) evaluate or provide for the

> evaluation of programs offered in the school; (d) direct the management of the school; . . . (h) evaluate the teachers employed in the school.

It is a description which suggests a traditional and autocratic leadership style based on rational-technical assumptions, where management is preeminent, where goal achievement is the overarching objective, and where leadership is individualistic, personalistic and focused on designated leaders (Rost, 1991, p. 180).

In the 1990s, researchers' findings are providing evidence which support the perception that the legislation and changes initiated during the first wave of reform and the effective schools movement did not accomplish the desired results:

> Most of the research and discussion about effective schools is implicitly a discussion about mass production (factory) technique. It answers the unspoken question: 'What can we do to overhaul public education. . .'? Yet it may be that the elusive nature of 'good schooling' is elusive precisely because it is so context sensitive that production functions are the wrong metaphor. (Richards, 1991, p. 185)

Richards' concern has been echoed by others (Bliss, Firestone & Richards, 1991; Driscoll, 1995; Lee, Bryk & Smith, 1993; Lambert et al., 1995).

Shared Governance Leadership. The second wave of education reform currently taking place throughout the Western world has been premised on a more complex set of assumptions. Barth (1990) elaborated on the differences between the "top-down" thinking of the effective schools movement and the "grassroots" assumptions driving the second wave of reform :

> Outside reformers usually wrestle with two questions: What do we want the schools to be like? And how do we get them to be that way? But the questions are shifting. Because outside prescriptions and interventions have led to disappointing results, because school people are asserting more responsibility for their own schools, and because promising models are being provided by industry, confidence is growing--by default as well as conviction--in increased governance and decision making at the school site. Many are coming to believe that those closest to students, and those likely to be most affected by the decisions, should make them. This guarded confidence in different forms of school-based management is posing a fundamentally different question with great implications for educators within the schools as well as outside them. (preface)

In their effort to restore public confidence in schools, governments have attempted to increase accountability by mandating changes in the way schools are structured and administered. Governments now set and evaluate standardized curricula while stakeholders within schools devise means to ensure student achievement of curricular objectives. Through a shared governance model, principals, teachers, parents, students, and community members are required to participate in developing strategies and allocating resources in order to achieve government standards for student learning. Some scholars are now referring to this restructuring of schools as "shared governance leadership" (Blase & Blase, 1997).

Little research or evidence is yet available to determine the success or failure of this second wave of reform. The "guarded confidence" to which Barth (1990) referred in the previously cited passage, however, has been echoed by others. From their recent study of principals' perspectives on this new model for school leadership, Blase and Blase (1997) found that the "shared governance model requires principals to accept criticism, deal with ambiguity, and trust and treat teachers as professionals by creating a supportive work environment in which they can take chances and risk failure" (1997, p. viii). However, these authors claimed, "there was scant evidence" to support the "notion that shared decision-making has improved student outcomes." Blase and Blase concluded that "shared decision-making models in practice have often not matched the theoretical models. In other words, they have not been properly implemented" (p. 11).

Some theorists have been more skeptical about the potential of government-mandated reforms to produce desired change in schools and improve student learning:

> Michael Fullan (1994) observed recently that neither the first wave of reform (with its top-down strategies) nor the second wave of reform (with its bottom-up strategies) have worked very well. In his words, "In short, centralized reform mandates have a poor track record as instruments for educational improvement. This failure has led some to conclude that only de-centralized, locally driven reform can succeed. Site-based management is currently the most prominent manifestation of this emphasis. So far, however, the claim of superiority of grass-roots initiatives is primarily theoretical. In reviewing evidence on site-based management, I concluded that restructuring reforms that devolved decision making to schools may have altered governance procedures, but did not affect the teaching-learning core of the schools. Nonetheless, it appears that changing school structures, and introducing new management systems, quality designs, and decision-making strategies are less means by which school cultures change, and more the results of changes in the school culture. (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 2)

In brief, Sergiovanni has emphasized that changes in school culture are occurring less as a function of government initiatives, and more as a result of the changes in the shared norms and values of the individuals who inhabit schools.

Evidence to date suggests government-devised leadership models in "practice" do not "match theoretical models" and are not being "properly implemented" (Blase & Blase, 1997, p. 11) as they are based on assumptions and goals of decision-makers outside of the context of schools. Further, available evidence suggests that the initiatives comprising the first and second wave of education reform have not fully accounted for the norms, values, and purposes of stakeholders within schools.

Emerging Perspectives On School Leadership

During this period of pervasive societal change where governments have responded to the crisis of confidence in educational leadership with reform initiatives based on production principles, theorists and scholars are questioning traditional assumptions about school organization, the context in which leadership occurs.

School as Community. In conditions which make "bonding in groups more tenuous than ever before in our history," scholars within the fields of sociology (Bellah, 1985; Etzioni, 1993; Putnam, 1995) and education (Barth, 1988, 1990; Beck. 1997; Driscoll, 1990, 1995; Merz, 1997; Merz & Furman, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1994a, 1994b) have investigated and written about the "increasing need for belonging and connectedness that comes from knowing one's community" (Merz, 1997, p. 1).

In the field of education, the introduction of the notion of "school as community" in the 1980s signaled a shift away from the dominant view of "school as factory." Critical of the influence of the production view upon educational research and practice, Driscoll (1990, 1995) has issued a repeated call for a more holistic view of school organization, a view which she has called "school as community:"

> In contrast to this rational-technical vision of schools, it is useful to redirect attention toward educational inquiry and practice that construes schools as dynamic and complex interactive wholes, as communities that embody history, change, process, and experience and shape and give meaning to the lives of those who teach and learn there. . . . Envisioning the school as a community means retaining an emphasis on the interconnections of individuals to one another and committing oneself to an attempt to reconstruct the whole even if the parts are examined separately.
> (1995, p. 213)

Citing Dewey, Driscoll put forth the contention that this communal view of education was not a recent "creation," but rather was rooted in fundamental beliefs and traditions underpinning our democratic way of life:

> Dewey spoke of the importance of the school's function in society and the necessity for schools to be construed as communities. Schools were the

> mechanisms through which a democratic society fostered and supported the development of citizens who were equipped to take care of one another. The school's function, then, was not a private one; its measure was not individual accomplishment or success, the school, he argued was 'primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends' (Dewey, 1970, p. 237). . . . Dewey's perspectives, even in his own time, challenged common conceptions of what schools and education should be. The factory model of education, born in the last century and surviving until our own time, was particularly guilty of ignoring the idea of community in schools. (p. 214)

Over the past decade, a significant but diverse body of research literature has emerged around the notion of school as community (Barth, 1990; Beck, 1997; Fullan, 1993; Goodlad, 1997; Glickman, 1993; Gregory & Smith, 1987; Merz, 1997; Merz & Furman, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Starratt, 1996). There is confusion and ambiguity surrounding the concept, however, caused by the multiple definitions and competing theories (Beck, 1997; Merz, 1997; Merz & Furman, 1997). The various conceptions, though unique, share certain characteristics: all focus on the importance of democratic principles in shaping the school organization; all place a high value on cohesive relationships and collaboration; all link teacher professional growth with student learning (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 15). In a recent review of the literature on effective secondary schools, Lee, Bryk and Smith (1993) found that communitarian critiques of contemporary schools drew attention to the liabilities of bureaucratic organization of schools and to the "importance of strengthening social ties between students and adults around the educational activities of a school." These authors concluded that the communitarian writing has "initiated fundamental discussions about the aims of schooling, the values that underlie these aims, and the meaning of the work students and adults do in schools" (p. 174).

Community of Leaders. Several scholars and theorists have incorporated the school as community view of organization in developing original perspectives on school leadership (Barth, 1988, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Starratt, 1996). Barth (1988), for example, by presenting his conception of school as a "community of leaders," introduced a change in metaphor that has had a significant impact on school leadership study. In a flattened school organization, Barth depicted school leadership as a set of interactive processes shared among administrators, teachers, students, and parents, where "everyone becomes a school leader in some ways and at some times in concert with some others" (1990, p. 171).

Sergiovanni (1994a) emphasized the importance of the "school as community" metaphor in developing perspectives on school leadership that were more suited to the school setting than those conceptions that had previously been imported from business and the corporate world:

> In communities, we create our social lives with others who have intentions similar to ours. In organizations, relationships are constructed for us by others and become codified into a system of hierarchies, roles, and role expectations. Communities too are confronted with issues of control. But instead of relying on external control, communities rely more on norms, purposes, values, professional socialization, collegiality, and natural interdependence. Once established, the ties of community become substitutes for formal systems of supervision, evaluation and staff development; for management and organizational schemes that seek to coordinate what teachers do and how they work together; and indeed for leadership itself. (p. 217)

In creating what he called "authentic relationships" in which these interactive processes of shared leadership occurred, there were developmental stages characterized by bartering, building, bonding, and binding (p. 192). By thinking of schools as communities, Sergiovanni concluded, leadership was defined by "ideas and relationships" (1994a, p. 223). In his most recent work, Sergiovanni (1996) has integrated several notions from previous writings on moral leadership and school as community:

> A theory for the schoolhouse should provide for decisions about school organization, curriculum, an classroom life that reflect constructivist teaching and learning principles. . . . A theory for the schoolhouse should encourage principals, teachers, parents, and students to be self-managing, to accept responsibility for what they do, and to feel a sense of obligation and commitment to the right thing. . . developing a practice of leadership for the schoolhouse will require a change in the theory of school itself. The change proposed is to understand schools as moral communities. (pp. xv-xvi)

Constructivist Leadership. Along with the metaphor of school as community, the phrase "community of learners" has been "used more and more frequently in educational writings to suggest new ways of thinking about schools" (Shields & Seltzer, 1997, p. 414). Lambert and her colleagues argued that the appearance of the community of learners language indicated a "shift in consciousness" and a new set of assumptions about society, learning, and knowledge (1995, p. 15). These authors elaborated:

> It was a coming together of major countervailing themes from throughout the century: the work of Bruner and Vygotsky in the social construction of knowledge, of Dewey and Combs in democracy in schooling, changing conceptions about the fluidity and scope of intelligences, quantum theory, women in leadership and research, brain research, the emergence into respectability of qualitative research, critical theory, and postmodern thought.
>
> This new "enlightenment" advanced some challenging assumptions; among them were: (1) The capacity to learn is not fixed or innate; (2) the social construction of knowledge actually changes 'intelligence,' therefore learning must be an active and interactive process; (3) student and adult learning are both fluid and linked; (4) achievement is increased when the culture of the school supports learning for both students and adults; and (5) new norms need to be developed that foster collaboration and shared inquiry. This was the first movement to place a high value on teacher growth and to link teacher and student learning. (p. 15)

In their recent review of the school as community literature, Lambert and her colleagues identified the ecological thinking underlying current conceptions:

> Community refers not just to a sense of cohesion among students and teachers, but also to the notion that the educational environment or 'ecology' plays an important role in how students learn and teachers teach (Bateson, 1972; Bowers & Flinders, 1990; Eisner, 1988; Goodlad, 1987; B. Joyce, 1976). The concept of the school as an 'ecology' was thought to comprise the norms of the school, expectations, patterns of behavior, processes, human and material resources. This integrative view of schooling suggest that an ecology is a complex and interrelated system that influences and supports intellectual growth. Further, student ability or intelligence is viewed not as predominantly innate, but as a function of the educational context. (1995, pp. 15-16)

Incorporating the community of leaders and learners thinking, and constructivist learning theory, Lambert and her colleagues argued that "the relationship between learning and leading philosophies is [and has a tradition of being] a dynamic one, each view changing as it is influenced by the other" (1995, p. 28). These authors explained:

> All humans bring to the process of learning personal schemas that have been formed by prior experiences, beliefs, values, socio-cultural histories, and perceptions. When new experiences are encountered and mediated by reflection and social interaction, meaning and knowledge are constructed. Learning takes place, as does adult development. When actively engaged in reflective dialogue, adults become more complex in their thinking about the

> world, more tolerant of diverse perspectives, more flexible and open toward new experiences. Personal and professional experiences require an interactive professional culture if adults are to engage with one another in the processes of growth and development. (p. 28)

People in school communities, they contended, "develop collective meaning together." Leadership, they defined as "the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling" (pp. 28-29). The "reciprocal processes," these authors defined as: those that "occur within the context of relationships," that focus on the "construction of meaning," and that "evoke potential in a trusting environment" (pp. 34-36). Conversation, narratives, and dialogue are given as examples of the reciprocal processes that enable individuals within schools to construct meaning. These meanings are "informed by common experiences and also by our own personal schemas" (p. 39). In Lambert et al.'s (1995) definition, the "educational community is considered the medium for meaning-making, for human growth and development" (p. 39). Borrowing from ecological theorists including Capra (1991) and Wheatley (1992), these authors defined community as

> an interconnected and complex web of reciprocal relationships sustained and informed by their purposeful actions. Community is manifest in the diversity of the system; and the more divers, the more rich and complex. Such communities are flexible and open to information provided through feedback spirals, as well as unexpected fluctuations and surprises that contain possibilities. The coevolution, or shared growth, of the participants in this community is propelled by the joint construction of meaning and knowledge and involves continual creation and adaptation. (pp. 42-43)

"Common purpose about schooling," these authors concluded, "emerges from conversations" that take place in communities like those described above (p. 47).

By expanding on ecological principles and the relational aspects of the context of leadership, Lambert and her colleagues have drawn attention to the cognitive nature of the processes comprising leadership. It is an integrative view which addresses several of the questions currently being raised within the field of leadership study (Starratt, 1993, p. 15).

Summary

In contemporary society where pervasive change has become the norm, there has been a tendency to "pick particularly on the schools when we are unhappy with ourselves" (Sizer, 1992, p. 1). The ambiguity and confusion surrounding school leadership study and practice, coupled with the belief that school reform is a prerequisite for societal change underpin the current call for new perspectives. Government-mandated school leadership models based on production principles are attempts to restore public confidence in the school system. Within the research community, scholars have called for new perspectives which contextualize leadership within school viewed as community. The school as community metaphor reflects changing norms and the current emphasis being ascribed to democratic values. Constructivist perspectives on leadership which are emerging have incorporated thinking from the school as community literature as well as aspects of constructivist learning theory. Lambert et al.'s (1995) definition of leadership has drawn attention to the relational context and cognitive dimensions of the interactive processes that occur among school members.

Secondary Schools

The early review of the secondary schools' literature focused on the "successful secondary schools' literature" strand. The discussion of this literature is organized under the following headings: (a) "North American Secondary Schools;" (b) "Education Reform and Successful Secondary Schools Research;" (c) "Leadership Within the Successful Secondary Schools Literature;" (d) "Summary."

North American Secondary Schools

> The contemporary high school is a profoundly American institution which contains many of our contradictions--elitism and populism, traditional symbolics and raucous realism, generosity and cruel stereotyping. (Hampel, 1986, p. xii)

The above claim taken from Sizer's preface to Hampel's *The Last Little Citadel*, underscores the historical and cultural significance of secondary schooling within North America. He argued that the traditional organization of secondary education along "five 'main lines'--English, mathematics, science, history, and foreign languages," originated with an "intellectual aim" and was formally "legitimated by the prestigious Committee of Ten of the National Education Association in 1893 (p. x).

Although the overall structure along subject lines has been "tenaciously retained," the substance and purpose of secondary schooling were dramatically altered by the "tidal wave" of immigration during the early decades of the 1900s (Conley, 1993, p. 21). With an enlarged mandate, public secondary schools became more than elite institutions with the "intellectual aim" of preparing select young people for university study. As comprehensive institutions, the expectation was that secondary schools would "educate *all* youth though in different ways and toward different ends" (Conley, 1993, p. 17). The North American secondary school in providing universal access was instrumental in meeting the unprecedented challenges of mass immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. John Dewey (1968) wrote extensively about the importance of public education, arguing that schooling provided the means to "improve one's lot in life," and that an educated citizenry was crucial for building and maintaining a democratic society.

In contemporary society, the high school graduation diploma continues to be equated with access to the "North American Dream." Sizer, in the preface to *The Last Little Citadel,* pointed out some "troubling consequences" of universal access and public expectations upon the evolution of secondary school education:

> There is generosity in the expansive American high school, a place in which every interest and taste is respectfully accommodated and from which everyone (or almost everyone) graduates as virtual, symbolic equals. It is a conception no less noble than that of a righteous citadel on a hill. Its populism is particularly attractive. However, its riotous eclecticism--of standards as well as program--has had and continues to have troubling consequences. (Hampel, 1986, p. xi)

In a similar vein, Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) likened the contemporary high school to a "shopping mall," where secondary school educators made all "accommodations necessary to keep doors open and the rite of graduation intact" (p. x).

Education Reform and Successful Secondary School Research

The secondary school has been the focus of attention during recent periods of government-initiated reform because of two pervasive beliefs: (1) Graduation from high school is a prerequisite for individual success. (2) The public education system can be evaluated based on the number of students: who complete high school, who excel on standardized assessments of pre-determined curricula, and who successfully make the transition from high school to the work-place or post-secondary study (Alberta Education, 1997; Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1996; Wilson & Rossman, 1993). The first belief has grown out of a lengthy tradition of universal access to, and public expectations of secondary school education. The second is based on assumptions underpinning the excellence movement in business and the parallel development of effective schools' research within the field of education (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 14).

Conley (1993) and others (Beare & Boyd, 1993; Jacobson & Conway, 1990) have claimed that with the Russian's launching of Sputnik in 1957, the contemporary call for reform was born and with it the "educational excellence movement" (Jacobson & Conway, 1990, p. 4). American politicians criticized secondary schools for not producing graduates capable of becoming world class scientists. Conant's 1959 report prompted several early reform initiatives aimed at secondary school education. Conant

> argued for stiffer academic requirements, tougher grading, and school consolidation, to increase in the range of advanced course offerings in small high schools. . . Conant's proposals were widely adopted,. . . the Conant report had a major impact on U.S. high schools despite the fact that Conant was forced to rely chiefly on persuasion to see his proposals carried through. (Jacobson & Conway, 1990, p. 5)

Although not research-based, Conant's assumptions were not questioned by a public intent on re-establishing American preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technology within the emerging global marketplace (p. 7). During the same period, the Coleman Report (1966) and Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" urged educational reform premised on the view that society was obligated to overcome the social and educational deficiencies caused by poverty and discrimination.

The concern for excellence and equal opportunity expressed in Conant's and Coleman's reports together embody the thinking which gave rise to the call for "excellence" in education, current education reform, and the effective schools movement (Jacobson & Conway, 1990, p. 4). Using an economically inspired "input-output" model, researchers intent on providing templates for school success turned to large-scale quantitative investigations of school effects (Driscoll, 1995, p. 215). Following their extensive review of the early effective schools literature, Wilson and Corcoran (1988) concluded that the studies linking school effects to student achievement had provided the "basis for an ideology" adopted by government reformers intent on school improvement. These authors elaborated on major findings from the early effective schools' research:

> The most popular summary of this research, the so-called 'Five Factor Theory,' identifies strong building leadership, clear goals, an orderly school climate, high expectations and standards, and frequent monitoring and assessment of student progress as the essential characteristics of effective

> schools (Edmond, 1979). These variables are often referred to as the 'Five Correlates.' (p. 2)

Some scholars have criticized the early effective schools' research on conceptual and methodological grounds, claiming it is unduly reductionist and prescriptive (Driscoll, 1995; Lambert et al., 1995; Lee, Bryk & Smith, 1993). Others have pointed out that given the confidence crisis in public education, the effective schools' research was "important, because it has restored optimism about the possibilities of school success" (Wilson & Corcoran, 1988, p. 4).

Successful Secondary Schools. In their review of studies conducted on effective secondary schools, Lee, Bryk and Smith (1993) focused specifically on school organization. For their conceptual framework, these authors used two contrasting perspectives: the rational-bureaucratic depicting schools as formal organizations with clearly defined roles, a functional division of labor and responsibility, and hierarchical authority structure; and the communitarian perspective which views schools as "small societies," emphasizing informal and enduring social relationships and an underlying "common ethos." Roles of adults and distribution of influence/power are diffuse and division of labor minimal (p. 173). Recent reform efforts and effective schools' research, these scholars claimed, have been dominated by the rational-bureaucratic perspective which emphasizes "the need to respond to individual differences instead of a commonality of interest." In conclusion, Lee, Bryk and Smith contended that effective secondary school research had underestimated "the importance of the normative features of the small society of the school in educating students" (p. 174). The concern expressed by Lee, Bryk and Smith has been echoed by other scholars who have called for a more integrated view of schooling (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Driscoll, 1995; Goodlad, 1997; Hargreaves, 1997; Merz & Furman, 1997; Saul, 1995).

The following discussion highlights three well-known studies of successful secondary schools which focused on effects indicating the success of each school. The first that is presented (Wilson & Corcoran, 1988) adopted a predominantly rational-bureaucratic perspective of secondary school; the second a predominantly communitarian perspective (Lightfoot, 1983); the third, a collective case study, included a combination of perspectives (Gaskell, 1995). These three studies have been selected for inclusion in this literature review for two reasons: because of the commonalities among the researchers' definition of "successful" (Wilson &

Corcoran, 1988), "good" (Lightfoot, 1983) and "exemplary" (Gaskell, 1995) secondary schools, and because of each researcher's claim that "success" was context dependent and not static.

Citing findings from numerous studies on effective schools, Wilson and Corcoran supported their contention that "the American public believes that good schools affect the educational achievement of students who are fortunate enough to attend them" (p. 1). With the purpose of providing a context for their own study of 571 secondary schools, these authors categorized and analyzed the studies comprising the growing body of literature which they called "successful secondary schools' research" (Boyer, 1983; Coleman, Hoffer & Kilgore, 1982; Cusick, 1983; Goodlad, 1983; Hampel, 1986; Lightfoot, 1983; Lipsitz, 1984; Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, 1985; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston & Smith, 1979; Sedlack, Wheeler, Pullin & Cusick, 1986; Sizer, 1984) (Wilson & Corcoran, 1988, pp. 8-10). Wilson and Corcoran's analysis revealed that most of the findings from studies of successful secondary schools were "based on impressions and expert opinion" (p. 10).

For their own study, Wilson and Corcoran selected 571 public secondary schools that had been recognized by the United States Department of Education as "unusually successful schools" (p. xi). Selection of the schools was based on criteria which included: evaluations of performance indicators such as student achievement, attendance, retention rates, number of student suspensions and student awards, as well as school qualities including school climate, student behavior, and staff expectations. Qualitative and quantitative data collected from each site supported the development of six general themes which these authors claimed characterized secondary school success: active leadership, professional work environments, positive learning environments, broad community involvement, continuous school improvement, and service to all children (p. xi). Wilson and Corcoran concluded that the "primary lessons" to be drawn from their study were:

> Energy, commitment, and vision of the professionals working in these schools are central to their success and that their successes can be replicated by others who are willing to dedicate themselves to a similar pursuit of excellence. (p. xi)

In a similar vein, but with a particular emphasis on the responsibility of the research community to provide examples of successful secondary schooling, Lightfoot (1983) noted:

> In recent years scholars who study schools have become increasingly aware of this tendency towards negativism, the pessimistic thrust of a large body of research, and have begun to ask a different series of questions. The inquiry begins by examining what works, identifying good schools, asking what is right here, and whether it is replicable, transportable to other environs. (p. 10)

For her study, Lightfoot selected six private and public secondary schools "because of their reputation among school people, and the high opinion of them shared by their inhabitants and surrounding communities" (p. 11). Adopting a case study approach, Lightfoot sought to

> capture the culture of these schools, their essential features, their generic character, the values that define their curricular goals and institutional structures, and their individual styles and rituals. I also try to trace the connections between individual and institution--how individual personality and style influence the collective character of the school. (p. 6)

Lightfoot's multi-dimensional cultural portraits of the six schools prompted her to conclude that "goodness" in secondary schools was a "holistic dimension whose interpretation requires an embeddedness in the context. . . goodness is imperfect and changing." Critical of the rational-bureaucratic perspective which she claimed dominated the effective secondary schools' research, Lightfoot argued that schools were "constantly changing institutions" and that a discussion of success or "goodness should reflect these transformations" (p. 24). Like Wilson and Corcoran (1988), Lightfoot from her analysis identified several overarching themes:

> In each of these schools we find intriguing and important lessons about educational goodness. We discover that good high schools reveal a sustained and visible ideological stance. . .that what is often perceived as solitary leadership in schools is fueled by partnerships and alliances. . . that qualities traditionally identified as female are critical to the expression of a non-caricatured masculine leadership. . . that good high schools offer teachers the opportunity for autonomous expression. . . students are treated with fearless and empathetic attention by adults. Teachers know students well and are knowledgeable about adolescence. . . . Good schools exhibit coherent and sturdy authority structures. . . good schools focus a great deal of their attention on the social and psychological dimensions of the environment [but] are also preoccupied with the rationale, coherence, and integrity of their academic curriculum. Finally, the students in good high schools feel visible and accountable. They balance the pulls of peer group association against the constraints of adult requirements. (p. 26)

In the spirit of the studies of Lightfoot (1983) and Wilson and Corcoran (1988), Gaskell's (1995) study of successful secondary schools was undertaken as a cooperative venture of the Canadian Education Association, the Department of Human Resources Canada, and several universities. The chief aim was to "identify and analyze successful practice in schools in different regions and to suggest policy implications" (vii). Through an extensive process involving researchers, educators, and provincial and local policy-makers, Gaskell and her colleagues identified 21 secondary schools across Canada that had a reputation for success among school stakeholders and within the community served by the school and represented the diversity of secondary schooling within Canada. Adopting a combination of research methods, Gaskell and her research teams investigated: the meaning and recognition of success; interaction between the school and its context; influence of structures, processes and culture of the school in fostering success; the characteristics of student life in the school; and services provided to students at risk of dropping out of school (p. vii).

A meta-analysis of the 21 case studies of successful secondary schools led Gaskell and her researchers to identify three tensions underpinning the organization of each of the schools:

> All schools experience three major tensions, although they vary in how they articulate these tensions and the degree of attention they pay to them: 1) between social and academic goals and functions, 2) between responding to individual and group differences and providing a sense of community and equality of opportunity for all, 3) between professional autonomy and social accountability. (p. x)

Similar to Lightfoot's (1983) claim, Gaskell and her team concluded that "school success is a complex and constantly evolving concept" which varies from one site to the next (p. 278). Cautioning policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers to not underestimate the importance of these tensions in future dialogues concerning reform in secondary education, Gaskell ended the summary report by highlighting the following indicators of "exemplariness" common to the successful secondary schools involved in the national study:

> What make these schools and educators successful at present are ultimately their sense of being special, their alertness and discernment in reading the landscape, their imagination and energy in responding to pressure points, and their competence and dedication in engaging their students in the pursuit of important ideas, valuable skills and humane values. (p. 281)

Claiming that there "is no single formula or combination of factors that will ensure success" (Wilson & Corcoran, 1988, p. 67), the authors of these studies of successful secondary schools cautioned against over-generalization. It is the researchers' criteria for selection of sites of inquiry, their use of multiple research methods, and their analyses of organizational structures and practices which make these three studies representative of the successful secondary schools' literature.

Leadership in Successful Secondary School Research. Education reformers and practitioners have been influenced by early findings from the effective schools' research. Instructional leadership which was discussed in the previous section, for example, is modeled on the assumption that "an essential ingredient" of successful schools is "strong, consistent, and inspired leadership" (Lightfoot, 1983, p. 322).

Studies of leadership in secondary schools have tended to focus on the principal who has most often been male. Lightfoot (1983) elaborated on the tendency in research and practice to equate leadership to the principalship, school leaders to principals, and secondary school principals to stereotypical masculine images of the military officer, the coach, and the father:

> The tone and culture of schools is said to be defined by the vision and purposeful action of the principal. He is said to be the person who must inspire the commitment and energies of his faculty; the respect, if not admiration of his students; and the trust of the parents. He sits on the boundaries between school and community; must negotiate with the superintendent and school board; must protect teachers from external intrusions and harassment; and must be the public imagemaker and spokesperson for the school. In high schools the principals are disproportionately male, and the images and metaphors that spring to mind are stereotypically masculine. The military, jock, father caricatures of the principal reflect exaggerated, anachronistic perspectives on the role and the man. Yet the expectations and views of high school leaders continue to be influenced by the caricatures. In each of these dominant principal images, authority is centralized; power is hierarchically arranged with the principal poised at the top of a steep pyramid. (Lightfoot , 1983, pp. 322-324)

The six principals included in Lightfoot's study of successful secondary schools were all men. She found that their leadership style and actions "did match some of the stereotypic images," but that each also had qualities which ran counter to the "anachronistic caricatures" of the high school principal (p. 323). From her analysis, Lightfoot concluded that "part of the goodness of these schools" rested on the redefinition of leadership:

> The redefinition includes softer images that are based on nurturance given and received by the leader; based on relationships and affiliations as central dimensions of the exercise of power; and based on a subtle integration of personal qualities traditionally attached to male and female images. (p. 333)

In the 21 successful secondary schools included in Gaskell's 1995 study, researchers found that leadership was often "rooted in the principal," but also observed that leadership was "often shared by many in the institution" (p. x). Gaskell in her conclusions and implications for policy stated

> School leadership should not rely too much on one person but rather on different elements in the school community: administrators, teachers, parents, students, politicians, and community leaders. Collaborative modes are more stable and successful. (p. 280)

Interestingly, Gaskell's study highlighted the "preoccupation with social control" in the secondary schools which were investigated, noting that "only in a few schools do students have substantial responsibilities related to school policy or student government" (p. xi). Based on these findings, Gaskell called for more discussion around the "nature and exercise of power in schools" (p. 281).

Based on findings from the 571 successful schools included in their study, Wilson and Corcoran (1988) reported that parents, students, and teachers were unanimous in citing the work of school principals as a "major and essential factor" contributing to the school's success. Wilson and Corcoran in their interpretation of the data acknowledged the contributions of teachers and department heads to school success. Citing Weick (1976), these researchers concluded that "schools are more loosely linked than other work organizations, providing principals with only limited opportunities to influence teachers' work" (p. 69). Further, they claimed, successful secondary schools "use bureaucratic linkages to create opportunities for teachers to act on that vision, and at the same time use cultural linkages to ensure that the vision can become part of the teachers' own professional culture (p. 80).

Commenting on the diversity of leadership styles observed among the principals in each of the 571 successful secondary schools in their study, Wilson and Corcoran made a clear distinction between leadership and individuals who hold designated leadership positions within the formal organization of each high school. In their discussion of the issue of "who provides leadership in these schools" (p. 80), these researchers stated:

> The reference to leadership throughout this discussion rather than to the principal has been intentional. While it is acknowledged that the principal is a primary force, leadership in secondary schools tends to be dispersed. Seldom do all the desired qualities or all of the required energy reside in one person. In most of the schools, there are a number of people who can and do take leadership roles at different times. These examples run counter to simple versions of the 'great man/woman' theory. What is clear is that many individuals take on leadership roles in successful schools, that the leaders change with the issue or situation. However, the principal is always a key actor, developing and supporting these other school leaders, and orchestrating their efforts into a harmonious whole that moves the school closer to its goals. At the heart of this harmony is the ability of formal leaders in these schools to recognize the strengths of a diverse set of people and to encourage those people to make maximum use of their skills. Good leaders develop other leaders. (p. 82)

By reframing the role of the principal as one "key actor" among many, "harmonizer," and "orchestrator," Wilson and Corcoran's analysis and conclusions about leadership in successful secondary schools digress from the image of the instructional leader which has grown out of the effective schools' movement and which continues to inform school leadership study and practice. The researchers concluded that leadership in the successful secondary schools of their study was "dispersed" throughout the organization; that the "leaders change with the issue," "no one style offers a solution"; no "single individual provides the answers" (p. 83).

Like the emerging perspectives on school leadership discussed earlier, the findings from studies of successful secondary schools together challenge traditional assumptions about secondary school leadership.

Summary

Underlying current criticism of secondary schools is the pervasive belief that graduation from high school is a pre-requisite to individual success, and the "eternal optimism that reforms in schools will right many of society's ills" (Wilson and Corcoran, 1988, p. 1). The effective schools' movement out of which has emerged the successful secondary schools' literature parallels the preoccupation with "excellence" in both the private and public sectors. Studies of successful secondary schools have emphasized either the dominant rational-bureaucratic or communitarian perspectives on school organization. Findings from successful secondary schools' research emphasize that "success" is an elusive notion that is unique and embedded in the historical and cultural context of each school; findings also challenge traditional assumptions about leadership by focusing on the relational aspects and dynamic processes of leading.

Conceptual Framework

From the outset, I acknowledged that the search of the literature was on-going. This chapter comprises a summary of the initial stage of the literature review which was undertaken in preparation of the research proposal prior to data collection and analysis for this study. The purpose of this initial review of the literature was not to generate hypotheses to be tested, but rather to identify areas within the field of research that would guide this inductive investigation. The conceptual framework developed through this initial review of the literature suggested that this study should investigate: (1) the constructivist processes of secondary school leadership, (2) the relational aspects of secondary school organization, (3) secondary schools that in the subjective view of school members have the reputation of being successful, and (4) the subjective views of principals, teachers, students and parents with respect to information concerning their lived experiences at school that they consider relevant.

This conceptual framework was also influenced by Lambert et al.'s definition of school leadership which proved useful during the data collection and data analysis stages of this study (1995, p. 29).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Instrumental case study, claimed Stake, is research "of a case to gain understanding of something else" (p. 3). In order to carry out this study of the leadership phenomenon, I adopted a collective case study approach (Stake, 1995, p. 3) with the belief that the study of selected cases was instrumental to gaining understanding of leadership within secondary schools that have a reputation for success. Underpinning this study were constructivist assumptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lambert et al., 1995; Stake, 1994, 1995) which have implications regarding the way in which this study was designed and conducted. This chapter includes a discussion of: the nature of constructivist inquiry and the implications of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying this collective case study; the influence of the pilot study on the research design and methodology developed for this investigation; the methodology employed to gather, analyze, and report the data; standards of rigor; ethical considerations and procedures; and the assumptions, delimitations and limitations that apply to this study.

The purpose of this discussion is to provide details about the research design and methodology so that readers will be able to evaluate the potential impact of each upon the strengths and weaknesses of this study. Moreover, by describing in detail the conduct of this study, my intent is to provide readers with information that will allow them to judge the extent to which this investigation has achieved its stated purpose.

Nature of Constructivist Inquiry

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) contended that:

> All qualitative researchers are philosophers in that "universal sense in which all human beings are guided by highly abstract principles" (Bateson, 1972, p. 320). These principles combine beliefs about ontology, epistemology, and methodology. These beliefs shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it. The researcher is "bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which--regardless of ultimate truth or falsity--become partially self-validating" (p. 314). This net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm (Guba, 1990, p. 17), or interpretive framework, a basic set of beliefs that guide action. (p. 13).

At the most general level, Denzin and Lincoln explained, educational research is undertaken from one of four different paradigmatic positions: the positivist/postpositivist; the constructivist-interpretive; the critical (Marxist, emancipatory); and the feminist poststructural. Denzin and Lincoln's description and discussion of these paradigms are useful in identifying and helpful in defining the philosophical framework of this research study. As researcher, my "philosophical net," the "basic set of beliefs" that guided the design and conduct of this study were constructivist-interpretive in nature. Research which is undertaken within the constructivist-interpretive paradigm

> assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. (p. 14)

For the purpose of clarity, I have referred to this paradigm as "constructivist" in the following discussion of the implications of my philosophical positioning upon this study.

Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

Nature of Reality. Constructivist inquiry assumes a relativist ontology where:

> Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions. Constructions are not more or less "true," in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed and/or sophisticated. Constructions are alterable, as are their associated "realities." (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110)

In brief, the claim here is that reality does not exist outside of the perceptions of the individual. Individuals construct their own realities based on their experiences and according to the meanings which they ascribe to those experiences and the purposes or outcomes they wish to achieve. The mental constructions comprising the realities of individuals are constantly being altered through experiences and through the on-going process of ascribing meaning to those experiences. Through this on-going process, the mental constructions comprising the individual's perception of reality become more or less "informed" and/or "sophisticated." Because the experiences upon which this on-going process of reality construction is based occur within a social context, elements "are often shared among many individuals;" the form and content of these shared constructions depend on the individuals who hold them. Lambert et al. (1995) in presenting their constructivist definition of leadership argued that the on-going processes of reality construction that occur within schools where individuals inhabit the same historical and socio-cultural context, are often "reciprocal" in nature. When these processes are reciprocal, these authors concluded, the potential for correspondence between and among the multiple perceptions held by those individuals is greater, as is the potential for the development of common purposes (p. xii). In a similar vein, Stake (1995) described the reciprocal processes whereby individuals sharing similar experiences "shape their realities to fit each other's":

> We may conceive of three realities. One is an external reality capable of stimulating us in simple ways but of which we know nothing other than our interpretations of those stimuli. The second is a reality formed of those interpretations of simple stimulation, an experiential reality representing external reality so persuasively that we seldom realize our inability to verify it. The third is a universe of integrated interpretations, our rational reality. The second and third, of course, blend into each other. Each human being has his or her own version of worlds #2 and #3 and these are ever changing. Yet most people manage not to drift off into worlds completely their own. It actually seems to us that we populate the same world as everyone else. Believing in a universal reality #1, two people sharing the same experience shape their realities to fit each other's. . . Views held by large numbers of people, especially respected people, are held credible, even factual. . . . It is self-jeopardizing to do other than to keep #2 and #3 robust, and ignoring #1 is a poor way to cross a busy street.
> (pp. 100-101)

"The aim of research," concluded Stake, "is not to discover [reality] #1, for that is impossible, but to construct a clearer reality #2 and a more sophisticated reality #3, particularly ones that can withstand disciplined skepticism" (p. 101).

By assuming a relativist ontology, it was not my intent to discover any absolute "truth" or "falsity" regarding the leadership phenomenon, for that would be like searching for "a universal reality" which Stake has reminded us is impossible to find as it does not exist. Rather, when I undertook this collective case study, it was my intent to gain an understanding of the constructed realities of various staff members, students, and parents within each secondary school and the way in which these individuals who shared the same socio-historical context "shape their realities to fit each other's." My belief was that such an understanding of the inter-relationship of individuals' perceptions within each site was instrumental in addressing the research questions guiding this investigation.

Relationship of Knower to Known. Constructivist inquiry assumes a subjectivist epistemology where:

> The investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the "findings" are literally created as the investigation proceeds. The conventional distinction between ontology and epistemology disappears. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111)

There has been a great deal of discussion and debate about the impact of the interactivity between the researcher and the object of research. In describing researchers as "gatherers of interpretations" and "interpreters" of those interpretations, for example, Stake (1995) emphasized the subjective nature of findings derived through the interactivity between the investigator and the object of investigation (p. 99). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) in their discussion of interactivity claimed:

> The researcher becomes the main research instrument as he or she observes, ask questions, and interacts with research participants. The concern with research objectivity is replaced by a focus on the impact of subjectivity on the research process. (p. 6)

The essence of this claim is that when a researcher assumes a subjectivist epistemological position, concern shifts from "objectivity" to the implications of interactivity between the researcher and the subject of research. The following explication of major implications that interactivity had for this study is provided so that readers might assess the impact of subjectivist epistemological assumptions upon the research process and findings.

The interactivity between the researcher and the subject of the research begins before the problem for study is chosen, the research questions are established, and the data are gathered. It is rooted, claimed Peshkin (1992), in "those personal orientations that I call subjectivity. . . . They [personal orientations] derive from my life history, my biography" (p. 102). As part of the research proposal for this study, I included a personal essay entitled, "Reflections On the Importance of the Biographical," in order to make explicit "personal orientations" underlying what I believed were my preconceptions regarding this study. The following excerpt from that essay highlights the origin and nature of those preconceptions:

> The conceptualization of this study and the articulation of the research question have grown out of my twenty year career as a high school teacher and administrator, and out of my year of reflection as a doctoral student in residence at the university. . . . Some have cautioned against "back yard research" suggesting that it is too difficult to make the familiar strange. After my year away from high school, I recognize that the "biographical" dimension of my thinking, shaped by having spent a great deal of my adolescent and adult life as an inhabitant of high schools, will be integral to this study.

My reasons for writing this essay prior to undertaking this study were threefold: (1) I believed this essay would assist me in being self-reflexive throughout the conduct of this investigation. Through the writing and re-reading of this essay, I wished to become more aware of the biases and assumptions which had grown out of my experiences and career in secondary education. (2) I believed this essay would help others assess the impact of subjectivity upon the findings; (3) I believed trustworthiness and authenticity would be enhanced by making these preconceptions explicit and part of the audit trail (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 111) maintained throughout the conduct of this study. Guba and Lincoln explained: "if the later case reports reflect only those things that were expected in the first place, we may confidently assert that the investigators were not open to actual context or events" (p. 363). The essence of this claim is that the findings must reflect the understandings of the participants and not those held by the researcher prior to the conduct of the study. By way of the extensive member checks conducted at several stages during this study, participants, through their in-put and feedback, affirmed that the interpretations and findings did indeed reflect their understandings. Further description of this strategy is included later in this chapter under the heading, "Standards of Rigor," and in the final chapter of this dissertation under the heading "Authenticity."

Perhaps the most important implication that interactivity had for this study was in terms of the relationships which I developed with respondents in both school sites over the year that I spent conducting this study. Before beginning the study in each of the schools, principals via the school newsletters explained to school members the nature of the study. They also included within these newsletters references to my experiences and career as a secondary school teacher and administrator. This "introduction" facilitated the process of gaining entry to each site, prompted participants to accept my presence in the school, and engendered trust. Guba and Lincoln (1985) and Stake (1995) have written about the positive effects of interactivity when authentic relationships are established between the researcher and the respondents. I believe that my background and reputation as a secondary school practitioner provided opportunities for investigation that would not otherwise have been available to me.

On the other hand, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and others (Erickson, 1973; Spradley, 1979) have pointed out the potential limiting effects of interactivity when respondents perceive the researcher as something other than a researcher. It is possible, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) explained, that respondents in these cases may provide information which they believe the researcher wants to hear, rather than sharing their own constructions of reality (p. 99). In addressing this potentially limiting effect of interactivity, I attempted to select a large and diverse number of respondents from the staff, student, and parent groups within each of the two schools. This was a conscious decision made in order to prevent overidentifying with one group or another within the school and in order to avoid selecting only those respondents who were "politically sympathetic" (p. 99) to my project and goals. The extensive member checks (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) conducted during the data gathering, data analysis, and writing stages of this study were undertaken as a way of addressing the potentially limiting effect of interactivity by allowing respondents to react to my understanding of their constructions of reality. Further discussion of the selection of participants and the manner in which member checks were undertaken is included later in this chapter.

In the preceding discussion of two major implications that interactivity had for this study, it has been my intent to provide information about ways in which I recognized and was self-reflexive about the impact of subjectivity upon this study.

Possibility of Generalization. The preceding discussion of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the conduct of this constructivist inquiry raises questions about the possibility of generalization of the findings. Stake (1995) and others (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln 1994; 1985) have contended that constructivist inquiry is not undertaken in order to discover universal truths or falsities that can be explained in terms of cause and effect relationships or in the form of grand theories. Because the constructivist researcher assumes that "human actions are seldom simply caused and usually not caused in ways that can be discovered" (Stake, 1995, p. 39), generalizations in the form of propositions are not possible. Rather, explained Guba and Lincoln (1985), "the aim of inquiry is to develop an ideographic body of knowledge in the form of 'working hypotheses' that describe the individual case" (p. 38). These working hypotheses are not explanations of cause and effect relationships between and among distinct variables, but rather are assertions (i.e., a summary of interpretations and claims) that the researcher makes based on his or her understanding of the complexities of human experience within a particular setting.

In describing how readers construct meaning from case study research focused on particularization and not generalization, Stake stressed the importance of providing for their vicarious experience. In the following, Stake (1995) differentiated between propositional generalizations expressed as universal truths, and "naturalistic generalizations" that are particular, unique, and embedded in each individual's experiences and perception of reality:

> People learn by receiving generalizations, explicated generalizations, from others, regularly from authors, teachers, authorities. People also form generalizations from their experience. Deborah Trumbull and I (Stake & Trumbull, 1982) decided to call these generalizations 'naturalistic generalizations,' as different from explicated (propositional) generalizations. Naturalistic generalizations are conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves. It is not clear that generalizations arrived at in two quite different ways are kept apart in any way in the mind. One set of generalizations through two doors. (p. 85)

The implications of the above for this study are twofold. First, in order to support the kind of "naturalistic generalization" described by Stake, I consciously focused on providing for the vicarious experience of the reader by incorporating "thick description" of key episodes and respondents' accounts within the narrative reports based on each case study. I framed the analysis and reporting of the data in this manner in order to "optimize the opportunity of the reader to gain an experiential understanding of the case" (pp. 39-40), so that he or she, if inclined, would be able to construct conclusions in the way described by Stake as "naturalistic generalizing."

The second implication pertains to the manner in which the interpretations, assertions, and findings in this study were made and presented. The search for meaning in case study research, asserted Stake, "often is a search for patterns, for consistency, for consistency within certain conditions" (p. 78). My interpretations, findings, and assertions about leadership in each case were constructed from the patterns and consistencies which emerged during the analysis of the data which took place both in the field and after all of the data had been collected. In elaborating upon the impact of the researcher's preconceptions upon the findings in case study research constructed within the constructivist paradigm, Stake explained "often the patterns will be known in advance, drawn from the research questions, serving as a template for the analysis (Stake, 1995, p. 78).

Instrumental in gaining an understanding of the patterns and consistencies between and among the multiple constructions of reality held by participants in each case was Lambert et al.'s (1995) constructivist definition of school leadership which assumes a relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology (p. 29). I recognized and acknowledged from the outset of this study that adopting Lambert et al.'s constructivist conception of leadership as "template for analysis" could be potentially limiting. I attempted to address this potential limitation in three ways: (1) By undertaking extensive member checks during the writing of the case study reports and the companions to the case study reports, my aim was to confirm that the constructions of reality represented in these written reports reflected those of the participants; that the interpretations of leadership were resonant with perceptions held by respondents. (2) By employing thick description in the writing of both the case study reports and companions to the reports, my intent was to depict the complexity of human experience in each school site and prompt readers to construct their own understandings of leadership based on vicarious experience, and (3) At the outset of this study, I acknowledged that my initial conceptualization of leadership in secondary schools with a reputation for success would be modified as I gained understanding of the respondents' perceptions of the case and as progressive focusing occurred. Further, references to the evolution of my etic construction of leadership included in the beginning and final chapters of this dissertation illustrate how the "working hypotheses" of leadership included as part of the findings of this study were developed.

Stake (1995) argued that all case study research conducted within the constructivist paradigm has the potential of supporting "naturalistic generalizations" where readers, based on their experience with the case and others like it, make interpretations and assertions that become part of the mental constructions comprising their unique perception of reality. Such constructivist inquiry is limited, Stake concluded, in the way it can support the propositional kind of generalizations that lead to traditional theory development. Stake outlined the limited possibility for generalization in the following explanation of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning case study research conducted within the constructivist paradigm:

> Given intense interaction of the researcher with persons in the field and elsewhere, given a constructivist orientation to knowledge, given the attention to participant intentionality and sense of self, however descriptive the report, the researcher ultimately comes to offer a personal view.
> (p. 42)

The aim of this constructivist inquiry was to offer a "personal" interpretation of the leadership phenomena in two secondary schools that have a reputation for success. The detailed discussion of the design and methodology of this study has been provided in order that readers might make their own judgment about the transferability of the findings.

Role of Values in Inquiry. Guba and Lincoln (1985) in explicating the ways in which naturalistic inquiry is value-bound developed the following "corollaries" that are helpful in explaining the role played by values in the conduct of this study:

> *Corollary 1:* Inquiries are influenced by *inquirer* values expressed in the choice of problem, evaluand, or policy option, and in the framing, bounding, and focusing of that problem evaluand, or policy option.
> *Corollary 2:* Inquiry is influenced by the choice of the *paradigm* that guides the investigation into the problem.
> *Corollary 3:* Inquiry is influenced by the choice of the *substantive theory* utilized to guide the collection and analysis of data and in the interpretation of the findings.
> *Corollary 4:* Inquiry is influenced by the values that inhere in the context.
> *Corollary 5:* With respect to corollaries 1 through 4 above, inquiry is either *value-resonant* (reinforcing or congruent) or *value-dissonant* (conflicting). Problem, evaluand, or policy option, paradigm, theory and context must exhibit congruence (value-resonance) if the inquiry is to produce meaningful results. (p. 38)

From the outset, I recognized that this study was value-bound. By providing the preceding discussion of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the design and conduct of this constructivist inquiry, it was my intent to explain the way in which values were interwoven into the research process. This information was provided so that readers might assess that process and the findings of this study.

Pilot Study

During June 1996, I conducted a pilot study in order to ascertain the suitability of the research questions, test the interview instruments and other data collection strategies, and test the data analysis procedures before undertaking this study. The general research question guiding the pilot study was: What is the relationship between leadership and culture in secondary schools with the reputation for being successful?

Selection of Secondary School Site

One public secondary school within a nearby urban center was selected for the pilot study. I selected this secondary school for two reasons: (1) In conversations with local educators knowledgeable about secondary school education, this school and its positive reputation were mentioned on several occasions. (2) After spending a day in October 1995 touring the school and speaking with the principal, several staff members, and several students, I had formulated my own positive impressions of this secondary school. The principal, staff members, and students to whom I spoke, without exception, believed that their school had a good reputation and was successful.

Data Sources, Collection, and Analysis

Data were collected primarily through two sets of tape-recorded interviews conducted with the principal, one teacher, one parent, and two students. The teacher, parent, and student respondents were selected based upon the recommendation of the principal and on the willingness of each to participate in the study. The respondents were recommended by the principal after I had explained the purpose of the study. He recommended these particular individuals because he considered each to be knowledgeable about the culture of the school and each to be either a "formal" or "informal" leader within the school.

Before beginning the interviews, I met with each participant in order to explain the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed for the interviews, and the ethical guidelines (i.e., provisions made for ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, and right to opt out). In the case of the two underage student participants, parents were contacted and consent was obtained prior to meeting with each student. Each participant was interviewed on two separate occasions with interviews lasting approximately one hour. The following semi-structured interview guide was used during the initial interview with each respondent:

1. Tell me about your school. What makes it a special/a good school?

2. Tell me about the rules and policies of the school (e.g., attendance, smoking, hallways, behavior, discipline, etc.). By what process did these rules come into effect? How effective are they?
3. Tell me about some of the important issues that have occurred over the school year?
4. Who would be some key students, staff members and parents to whom I would speak if I wanted to create as complete a description as possible of this school? How do you believe each of these individual perspectives would be different than yours?

The typewritten transcription of the first interview was returned to each participant before the second interview was conducted in order to allow participants the opportunity to conduct a thorough member check (Guba and Lincoln, 1985) before the content of the transcription was analyzed. When the transcriptions were returned, each participant was also asked to note questions and identify topics for discussion for the second interview. At the beginning of each of the second interviews, I asked respondents to create a diagram of the school that depicted the lines of communication and responsibility within the school organization. I asked them to use the general terms "students," "teachers," "principal," etc. The remainder of each of the second interviews was guided by questions and topics determined by each of the respondents. Typewritten transcriptions of the second interview were returned to each participant for a final member check before the content was analyzed.

Data were also obtained from written field notes based on observations conducted within the school during the three week period in which the interviews were conducted, and from relevant school and school district documents (e.g., policy handbooks, newsletters, promotional materials, etc.). Content analysis was conducted on the interview transcriptions, field notes, and documents in order to test coding procedures and in order to establish patterns and consistencies between and among the data sources.

Influence of the Pilot Study

A written audit trait (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) was maintained throughout the month long study as data were collected and analyzed. The audit trail provided a written record of concerns, questions, and decisions made. The audit trail along with the data collection and analysis procedures were discussed with my supervisor during regular meetings. Although specific categories were not constructed during this pilot study, several patterns and consistencies (Stake, 1995, pp. 75-78) emerged from the data analysis that supported the following key decisions made regarding the research design and methodology of the present study.

Research Questions. During the conduct of the pilot study, it became clear to me that each respondent brought his or her own perspective on leadership to the interviews, and that these perspectives reflected individuals' interpretations of routine (i.e., day-to-day) and non-routine (i.e., issues and innovations) occurrences within the school. In order to emphasize the importance of subjective experiences of staff, student, and parent members within each school, I modified the general research question. The revised general research question which guided the present study was: How do the students, parents, and staff within two secondary schools with a reputation for success experience and understand leadership? A secondary purpose was also created and stated in the form of the following question: How are leadership and culture intertwined within each of the selected schools? The specific research questions were also altered in order to emphasize the subjective realities of school members. The specific research questions guiding this investigation were:

1. How do the students, parents, and staff members within selected secondary schools with a reputation for success perceive the formal organization of the school?
2. How do the students, parents, and staff members within these selected secondary schools perceive the school culture?
3. How do the students, parents, and staff members perceive and experience "routine" (i.e., day-to-day) activities within the school?
4. How do the students, parents, and staff members perceive and experience "non-routine" occurrences (i.e., issues and innovations) within the school?

There was a pattern that emerged from the data gathered from the second interviews during which respondents had drawn diagrams depicting the lines of communication and responsibility within the school. The diagrams of all four respondents emphasized a non-hierarchical pattern of trusting relationships between and among adults and students. The correspondence which I observed among the four respondents' interpretations was a key factor in my decision to adopt a constructivist conception of school leadership to guide the data collection and data analysis stages of the present study (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 29).

Interview Guides. The questions constructed to guide the two sets of semi-structured interviews for the present study purposely did not include the word "leadership." The decision to exclude the word leadership was made following the pilot study where the word was used in interview questions with two of the four respondents who participated in that study. From the respondents' answers, it became evident that when I mentioned the word "leadership," the tendency was to focus on a discussion of "principal leadership" to the exclusion of discussion of other leadership initiatives occurring within the school. There appeared to be ambiguity surrounding the meaning that these two respondents ascribed to the word. This ambiguity was similar to what I had found documented in the research literature on leadership and prompted me to make the decision to neither encourage nor discourage respondents from using the word "leadership" during the two semi-structured interviews. The questions which guided the first semi-structured interview of the present study can be found in Appendix B.

For the present study, I followed the same procedure for the second set of interviews as was adopted in the pilot study. The second interview in each case was based upon topics determined by respondents once they had reviewed the typewritten transcription of the first interview. I also prepared questions for each of the second interviews in the event prompts were required. Please see Appendix C for an example of one of the second interview guides.

Further, based on my experience of having transcribed all tape-recorded interviews during the pilot study, I made the decision to transcribe all tape-recorded interviews conducted during the present study. I made this decision for the following three reasons: (1) I found that the process of listening and typing helped me become familiar with the respondents and prepare for the second interview. The process also helped me become familiar with the content of the interview. (2) Data analysis was continuous throughout the study and not interrupted by the time that typically elapses when tape-recorded interviews are "sent off" to be transcribed by a third party. (3) I found that the time between the first and second interview could be kept relatively short when I did the transcriptions myself. This compression of time and commitment to return transcriptions promptly, I believe, helped me to establish trust and maintain positive relationships with each of the respondents.

In summary, the pilot study influenced the development of the general and specific research questions and the development of interview guides. It also influenced the selection of approaches and techniques for data collection and data analysis for the present study.

Methodology

The following is a detailed discussion of the selection of school sites, the selection of participants, and the approach and strategies employed during the data collection and data analysis stages of this study.

Secondary School Sites

The school sites selected for this study were two of the twenty-one secondary schools included in the Canadian Education Association's *Exemplary Schools Project* (Gaskell, 1995). After reading Gaskell's summary report as well as the individual case study reports written by each team of researchers involved in the project, I selected to examine more closely two of the case study reports which in my mind depicted the complexity of human experiences and relationships, and which appeared to be promising sites where I could carry out this investigation of the leadership phenomenon. In each of the two instances, I contacted local school district personnel about the possibility of conducting this study in these schools that had participated in the *Exemplary School Project.* Permission was granted to approach the principals in each school site. When I contacted the principals, I found that each had been in his position for more than five years and had participated in the *Exemplary School Project* during the 1993-1994 school year. Each principal was provided with a copy of the research proposal and after a discussion of the purpose and scope of this study, each agreed to become involved. Once this had occurred, the guidelines for obtaining permission to conduct research within each school district were followed and letters of permission from the two school districts were procured.

Riverview School. The school which I have called Riverview in this study served as the site of the first case study. Located in a small rural center in Alberta, Canada, this comprehensive school housed 350 students from grades one through 12. One hundred fifteen students were enrolled in a combination of academic and non-academic level courses in grades 10 through 12 of the secondary school program. Eleven teaching staff, eight full-time and three part-time, delivered the full range of academic and non-academic core courses. Although Riverview School followed a semestered system, several core courses were scheduled over the full year while most were scheduled over one half of the year. Complementary courses available to students included options in physical education, career and technology studies, and the fine arts. Innovative timetabling and a broad selection of courses, including distance education courses, comprised the diverse and flexible secondary school program developed to meet the wide range of student needs within Riverview School.

Evergreen Community High School. The second site, called Evergreen Community High School in this study, was an alternative secondary school housing 120 students in a large urban center in Ontario, Canada. Seven full-time teaching staff delivered the core and complementary courses to students enrolled in grades 10 through Ontario Academic Course level (i.e., OAC). In Ontario, the OAC level is attempted by students after the completion of grade 12. The OAC level comprises five courses in the humanities and/or sciences designed to meet the requirement for university entrance. Evergreen Community High School followed the semester system; all courses were scheduled over one half the year. Evergreen, as an alternative secondary school within the large urban school system, had a mandate to offer an "innovative program." The curricular focus at Evergreen was on the humanities and visual arts, although courses in the sciences and mathematics were also available to students. Every semester, students were required to register in a compulsory community service course ~~called~~ "Outreach."

Data Sources and Data Collection

Data were gathered from multiple sources over a five month period from mid-September 1996 through January, 1997. Data sources included: interviews with staff members, students, and parents; regular observations of classroom, hallway, and extra-curricular activities; and observations of a variety of school meetings. Handwritten field notes were taken during and directly following the observations. An annotated summary of these notes became part of the audit trail (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) which was maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis stages. Please see Appendix F. Relevant school, school district, and government documents were also collected for analysis over the five month period and included school handbooks, yearbooks, newsletters, school board policy manuals, and the Ontario government discussion paper on secondary education reform.

From mid-September, 1996 through January, 1997, I spent five consecutive weeks in each of the two schools making field observations and conducting interviews. Following this period of daily visits, I made return visits to each school on two separate occasions in order to meet with participants and complete member checks of written reports. During the period when I was making daily visits to each school, and following the two return visit to each school, fieldnotes were kept and later supplemented by audio-cassette recordings made during the 30 to 40 minutes spent traveling home from each of the two school sites.

Central to this collective case study was the belief that gaining an understanding of the constructed realities of a diverse group of staff members, students, and parents within each secondary school was instrumental in learning about leadership in secondary schools that have the reputation of being successful. Interviewing, therefore, was the primary technique employed for data collection. Before beginning the interviews, I spent approximately one week in each school observing classroom, hallway, staffroom and extra-curricular activities, as well as a variety of formal and informal school meetings. During this initial period, I had numerous informal conversations with students, staff members and parents. Through these conversations and through announcements which appeared in school newsletters, the overall purpose of my presence within each school became known to staff, students, and parents. Announcements included in the Riverview School newsletter can be found in Appendix D. During this time before interviewing began, potential respondents were identified using the techniques described below in the sections titled "Riverview School Participants," and "Evergreen Community High School Participants." In the case of underage student participants, written permission was sought and gained from parents during this initial period before interviewing began. Once respondents had agreed to become involved, each was provided with a copy of the approved ethics review form which clearly outlined the nature and scope of their involvement in the study, as well as considerations such as anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to opt out of the study. In the case of Riverview School, the ethics review form approved by the University of Alberta was used. For Evergreen Community High School, the approved ethics review form created and specified by the local school board was used.

Each respondent was interviewed on two separate occasions with each interview lasting as long as two hours and as short as 30 minutes with the average length being 45 minutes. The first interview guide was constructed to reflect the research questions, but in order to allow for the greatest understanding of the subjective reality of each interviewee, a semi-structured interview format was used. Copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix B. Participants were encouraged to talk about the school organization, school culture, school activities, and school issues from their point of view.

For reasons noted above, I transcribed all of the tape-recorded interviews. After each respondent had an opportunity to review the typewritten transcription from the first interview, a second interview was conducted. It was directed by questions which I had constructed following the first interview and by topics identified by each respondent after he or she had read the transcription from the first interview. See Appendix G for a sample covering letter outlining the nature of involvement in this first member check.

In the case of Riverview School, the second interview was not tape-recorded and lasted on average 20 minutes. Handwritten notes describing the content and context of each conversation were made directly following this second interview. In the case of Evergreen Community High School, the second interview was tape-recorded and lasted on average one hour. Handwritten notes describing the context of each conversation were made directly following the second interview. I transcribed these second interviews and returned typewritten copies of the transcriptions to each respondent for member check.

Riverview School Participants. A total of 19 staff members, students and parents from Riverview School participated in the interviews. Included were the principal, the vice principal, five teaching staff members, two support staff members, eight students, and two parents. Following is a brief description of the principal, staff, student, and parent groups.

The principal had been in his current position for 11 years. As well as being the chief administrator in the school, he had also maintained a part-time assignment teaching mathematics to the senior high school students over this 11 year period. His administrative responsibilities included overseeing the elementary and senior high school curricular programs and supervising the teaching staff involved in the delivery of these programs. The vice principal had been in his current position for over 15 years, during which time he had also maintained a part-time assignment teaching senior high school biology. He was also responsible for the administration of the junior high school and the Integrated Occupational programs within the school. He supervised the teachers involved in delivering each of these programs.

Seven of the eleven secondary school teachers and two of the five support staff members participated in the interviews. Selection of these staff members was based on their availability and willingness to become involved. One of the teacher respondents was new to the school while the others had been part of the staff for between three and fifteen years. One support staff member had been at Riverview School for three years, while the other had been a part of the staff for more than fifteen years. Comprising this staff group were five men and four women.

Two grade 10 students, two grade 11 students, and four grade 12 students were selected based on my observations of each in the classroom and extra-curricular settings. These students, in my mind, were representative of the student population and were invited to participate because I believed that each would provide a unique perspective. Together, this group of students represented the diverse backgrounds and academic abilities that I had observed within the student population. Included within this group of students were four young women and four young men. Written consent from parents was sought and obtained before underage students were invited to participate. Please see Appendix E for details concerning communication with parents.

Two parents, both women, were also interviewed and were selected because of their availability, and because each had served on one parent committee or another. One of these respondents had three children in different grades within the school; the other had two children in different grades and one child who had recently graduated from the school. When these two parents were invited to participate, it was assumed that each had, over time, become knowledgeable about the school and would be able to provide a unique perspective.

Evergreen Community High School Participants. A total of 22 staff members, students, and parents from Evergreen Community High School participated in the interviews. Included were the principal, all seven teaching staff members, one student teacher, one support staff member, ten students, and two parents. Following is a brief description of the principal, staff, student, and parent groups.

The principal was responsible for the overall administration of school programs and the supervision of staff within the six alternative secondary schools of the large urban school board of which Evergreen Community High School was a part. He had held this position for seven years and had an office housed in the local school district office. Although the principal did not make daily visits to the school site, he maintained regular and frequent contact with teachers, students, and parents through telephone communication and occasional visits.

All seven of the teaching staff members participated in the interviews. Three had been teachers at Evergreen for more than 15 years; two had been on staff for five years or longer; and two had been part of the staff for three years or less. The male student teacher, a former student of Evergreen, also participated in the interviews. Included in this group were four men and four women.

The office administrator was the only support staff member on site at the school. She had been a volunteer parent within the school before becoming part of the staff in 1978 and was responsible for the operation of the school office.

Nine of the student respondents, four young women and five young men, were selected based on my observations of each in the classroom and extra-curricular settings. These students, in my mind, were representative of the diversity within the student population and were selected because I believed that each would provide a unique perspective. Together, this group of students represented a broad range of backgrounds and academic abilities. One student summarized what I quickly observed within Evergreen Community High School; "Students here don't go by grades" and "age doesn't matter." For my own information, I did ask student respondents their age. One student was 19; two were 18; two were 17; two were 16 and two were 15. A former student also participated in the interviews. She had graduated from the school 15 years before and was in her early 30s. Written consent was obtained from parents before these students were invited to participate in the interviews. Please see Appendix E for details concerning communication with parents.

The two parents, both women, had been involved in parent committees within the school and it was my observation of each during committee meetings that prompted me to invite them to participate in this study. I believed that each of these parents was knowledgeable about the school organization and culture, and would contribute a unique perspective.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in case study research, claimed Stake (1995), is "a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71). "The search for meaning often is a search for patterns, for consistency, for consistency within certain conditions, which we call correspondence" (p. 78). As researchers become engaged in the process of searching for patterns in the data from which interpretations and assertions can be constructed, they "have certain protocols that help them draw systematically from previous knowledge and cut down on misperceptions," concluded Stake. "Still, there is much art and much intuitive processing to the search for meaning" (p. 72). The following is a discussion of the protocols employed, and the intuitive processing inherent, in the analysis and interpretations of the data collected during this investigation.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) claimed that there are really two stages of data analysis: the first stage of analysis as data are being collected, and the second stage after data collection has been completed (p. 154). Data analysis for this study occurred in the stages described by Bogdan and Biklen. Merriam (1988) contended that the researcher who fails to recognize the importance of the first stage of analysis that occurs during data collection, "runs the risk of ending up with data that are unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed" (p. 124). Early on during the collection of data, I became aware of running the "risk" of accumulating an "overwhelming" volume of "unfocused and repetitious" data given the number of participants in each of the two school sites. Recognizing this possibility, I made two decisions which had an impact on the way data were processed during this first stage of data analysis: (1) As I began to transcribe the first tape-recorded interviews, I recognized that each respondent's account contributed in a unique way to my understanding of the case. In order to gain a clearer understanding of the uniqueness of each respondent's perspective, I decided to create questions for the second interview which probed individual respondents' perceptions while reflecting the specific research questions. Please see Appendix C for an example of the second interview guide. Respondents were provided with a copy of the transcription of the first interview before the second interview took place and were asked to comment on topics from the first interview during the second interview. I found that the questions I had created in preparation for the second interview were often similar to those prepared by the respondents. This correspondence helped me identify initial patterns of meaning in the data and, in my mind, enhanced confirmability and dependability of the research. (2) Throughout the interviewing, preliminary data analysis was guided by Lambert et al.'s constructivist conception of leadership (1995, p. 29). Respondents were encouraged in both interviews to explain in detail their perceptions and how they had come to hold these understandings. In all cases, respondents' accounts included an explanation of how they believed their perspective differed and/or was the same as other people's. These two techniques employed during this first stage of analysis were helpful in identifying patterns and consistencies in the data and in making the second stage of data analysis "conceptually manageable as well as mechanically feasible" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 153).

The second stage of data analysis occurred after all the data had been collected and began with a thorough examination of the observational field notes, and relevant school and school district documents that had been collected from each school site. Drawing on conventional hermeneutical techniques (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), field notes and documents were analyzed and patterns and potential categories were noted in each case. An annotated summary of analysis in each case was submitted to my supervisor for comments and discussion before interview transcriptions were analyzed. Please see Appendix F for an excerpt from the Evergreen annotated summary. Following a discussion of each annotated summary and potential categories with my supervisor, I reviewed the research questions in preparation for the content analysis of the approximately 2 000 typewritten pages of interview data.

With potential categories and research questions in mind, I undertook an in-depth reading of all pages of the interview transcriptions from both schools. During this reading, I used colored post-it notes and highlighting pens in order to identify passages from the interview transcriptions which corresponded to the potential categories. Other passages were also noted and marked as patterns and consistencies emerged. Through this intense exercise of coding the interview data over a period of three weeks, I was able: (1) to identify new categories and modify those that had previously been constructed, and (2) to establish an organizational structure for the written reports for the two case studies. The following abbreviated category titles became the common headings used in each of the case study reports: "School as Community," "Diversity in Community," "Perceptions of Students," "Perceptions of Staff," "Tensions within Community," "Measuring Success," and "Celebrating Community."

As the purpose of this study was to investigate how leadership was experienced and understood by staff members, students and parents within each selected secondary school, once these categories had been established, I decided to focus on one school at a time as I continued my analysis of the interview data. The data from each school site, therefore, were analyzed and interpretations and assertions were made in terms of each particular case. At this stage, I also spent time listening to several of the tape-recorded interviews. The sub-headings used in each of the written case study reports are different, emphasize the particular, and reflect the uniqueness of each case. A summary of the findings from this stage of analysis can be found in Chapter 8. The case study report of Riverview School was completed before the Evergreen Community High School case study report was written.

After the two case study reports had been written and submitted to member check, an in-depth reading of each was undertaken in preparation for the writing of the analysis of each case study report. See Appendix H for copies of letters explaining the purpose of this second member check. Patterns were noted and potential themes were highlighted. Comparisons between the two cases were not made in a systematic fashion, but the instances where there was correspondence between the two cases were noted. This analytical exercise took place over a three week period and was significant for two main reasons: (1) Themes pertaining to the research questions were constructed. (2) I was able to develop an organizational structure for the companions to the two case study reports based on these themes. The following titles reflect these themes and became the common headings used in each of the companions to the case study reports: "The Context of Leadership," "The Processes of Leadership," "Tensions Underlying the Context and Processes of Leadership," and "Interpretations of the Leadership Phenomenon."

Once these themes and the format for the companions to the case study reports had been established, I focused on one case at a time as I undertook the writing. Analysis, interpretations, and assertions were contextualized within the research literature and were made in terms of each particular case. Illustrations from each case study were also included. Narrative and descriptive passages have been incorporated into both of these chapters which I have called "companions to the case study." Subheadings in each companion were different and emphasized the uniqueness of each case. The companion to the Riverview School case study was completed before the Evergreen Community High School companion was written. The Riverview School companion comprises Chapter 5 of this dissertation; the Evergreen Community High School companion can be found in Chapter 7. A summary of the interpretations comprising each of these companion chapters can be found in Chapter 8.

After the two companion chapters to the case study reports had been written and submitted to member check, an in-depth reading of each was undertaken in preparation for the writing of the last chapters of this dissertation. See Appendix I for an example of the covering letter explaining the purpose of this third member check. Again, comparisons between the two cases were not made in a systematic fashion, but the instances where there was correspondence between the two cases were noted. This inductive analytical exercise was on-going over a two month period and led to the conclusions presented in Chapter 8, conclusions which I have called "working hypotheses" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

Standards of Rigor

In addressing the question of rigor in qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) put forth the contention that:

> The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, and depth to any investigation (p. 2).

The criteria for establishing trustworthiness of research conducted within the interpretive-constructivist paradigm, therefore, are different than those applied to research undertaken within the other paradigms. "Terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity" (p. 14). The following discussion of the strategies adopted to enhance the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of this research has been included so that the reader might assess the rigor that was applied throughout this study, and judge the research process and findings. A brief discussion of criteria for judging the authenticity of this research study is also included.

Credibility

In order to enhance credibility, two strategies were employed: triangulation, and member checks.

Triangulation. Stake (1995) referred to the importance of triangulation as a protocol to enhance the credibility of qualitative research. Triangulation, he defined as "working to substantiate an interpretation or to clarify its different meanings" (p. 173). I attempted to provide for triangulation in four ways:

1. Multiple data sources and data collection strategies were used. Data collected from interviews, field observations, and relevant school documents within each school allowed for triangulation by providing a variety of perspectives on the case. 2. By including several respondents from three different referent groups within each school

site, a diversity of perceptions, of constructed realities of each case, were incorporated.

3. By collecting data over a period of five month there were multiple opportunities for triangulation in each case. Data collected over this time period reflected complexities of the case that would not likely have been perceptible if data had been collected over a shorter period of time.

4. At regular meetings with my supervisor during the data collection, analysis, and writing of the case study reports and companions to the case study reports, patterns of meaning, interpretations and assertions were presented and debated in a manner described by Stake (1995) as investigator triangulation (i.e., where alternative interpretations are discussed with other researchers) (p. 113). Presentations based on this study which I made to other researchers at the 1997 Annual Meeting of the American Research Association, and at the University of Alberta in November, 1997 provided two more opportunities for investigator triangulation. These interactions with other researchers were helpful in preparing the draft and revised versions of this dissertation.

These attempts to provide for triangulation were undertaken in order "to increase credence in the interpretation, to demonstrate commonalty of an assertion" (p. 112).

Member Checks. Member check, "whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholder groups from whom the data were originally collected," claimed Guba and Lincoln (1985) " is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Member checks were conducted at three different stages during this study:

1. Typewritten transcriptions from all tape-recorded interviews were returned to respondents for editing and approval before analyzed as data. Respondents were asked to note questions or topics for further discussion. The questions respondents constructed based on the initial interview provided the framework for the second interview. Please see Appendix E.

2. Draft versions of the case study reports were returned to all respondents for editing and approval before analytical themes were constructed and prior to the writing of the companions to the case study reports. Respondents were asked to make specific comments on how accurately the case study report reflected their perceptions of the case. The feedback from this member check confirmed that the

case study reports reflected respondents' experiences and perceptions. Please see Appendix F.

3. Draft versions of the companions to the case study reports (i.e., Chapters 5 and 7) were returned to selected respondents from each of the three referent groups for member check. This was undertaken prior to writing the findings and conclusions section found in Chapter 8 of this dissertation. The feedback from this member check confirmed that the interpretations of the leadership phenomena included in the companions were resonant with respondents' experiences and understandings. The cover letter explaining the nature of this third member check can be found in Appendix I.

Transferability

Stake provided an in-depth discussion of transferability whereby he contended that findings from the case study are different than knowledge from other research traditions because they are more concrete and resonant with the experience of the reader of the study, because they are more contextual, because they are more developed by reader interpretation, and because they are based more on reference populations determined by the reader. In order to provide the "data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (Stake, 1981, pp. 35-36, cited in Merriam, 1988, pp. 14-15), I attempted to provide for the reader's vicarious experience in the following ways. Both of the case study reports include extensive descriptions and key respondents' accounts. The companions to the case study reports also include extensive descriptions as well as interpretations of, and assertions about the context and processes of leadership in each case. These interpretations and assertions about leadership are embedded in references to the research literature which were included in order to provide data for the further development of reader interpretation.

Dependability and Confirmability

In order to enhance dependability and confirmability, an on-going audit was conducted as part of this study. As part of the on-going audit, during the data collection, analysis, and writing stages of the study, I met regularly with my advisor to review decisions made and questions that had arisen. A record of these meetings has been kept. The audit trail, "the residue of records stemming from the inquiry" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 319), for this study includes records of activities, decisions, and concerns which occurred during all phases of the study. The audit trail comprises electronic and paper entries that have been assembled in such a way as to allow for other audits.

The audit trail, along with the extensive member checks undertaken throughout the data collection, data analysis, and writing stages of this study, were important techniques used to enhance dependability and confirmability. Please see Appendix F for an example.

Authenticity

Beyond the trustworthiness criteria, Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposed a second set of criteria, the authenticity criteria, which they claimed were important for judging the "goodness and quality of constructivist inquiries." These criteria include fairness, ontological authenticity (enlarges personal constructions), educative authenticity (leads to improved understanding of construction of others), catalytic authenticity (stimulates to action), and tactical authenticity (empowers action) (p. 114). Over the five month stage of data collection and through the extensive member checks conducted over the length of this study, fairness, ontological authenticity, and educative authenticity were addressed. In January 1997, for example, I made a presentation to secondary school principals in Edmonton-based on the research in progress. Throughout the conduct of this study, I have maintained several on-going dialogues with colleagues from the field. The feedback from practitioners has been useful for addressing matters of authenticity. Further discussion of these and the other authenticity criteria has been included in the final chapter of this dissertation.

Ethical Considerations and Procedures

To ensure that the ethical standards of the University of Alberta were satisfied, the following steps were taken in preparation for the conduct of both the pilot study and the present study:

1. Ethical review forms were completed and approval to conduct both studies was obtained prior to approaching the school and school district personnel.
2. Approval to conduct the pilot study was gained by following procedures outlined and agreed upon between the University of Alberta and the school district involved.
3. Approval to conduct the present study was obtained from the two school districts using the official procedures outlined by each of those school districts. In the case of Evergreen Community High School, a separate ethics review form developed by the school district of which it was a part had to be completed and approved before permission was granted.

Treatment of Participants

Ethical considerations regarding the treatment of participants in the present study included:

1. The nature of my presence in the school and the scope and purpose of the study were explained to the principal, and then staff members in each case once permission to conduct the study was obtained from school district personnel.
2. Through the school newsletter, students and parents were alerted to the scope and purpose of the present study along with the time frame for the collection of data Please see Appendix D for a copy of the letter which was included in the Riverview School newsletter.
3. Written consent from parents of the underage student participants in both school sites was requested and obtained before students were invited to participate in interviews. Please see Appendix E for details. A copy of the completed and approved ethics review form was distributed to parents at the same time that written consent was requested. My telephone number was included in order that parents could contact me with questions or concerns at any point during the conduct of the study. Once written permission was received, a time was set to meet with each student in order to discuss the purpose of the study as well as the nature of participant involvement and matters of anonymity, confidentiality, and right to opt out of participation.
4. At the time that consent from all adult participants was requested, a copy of the approved ethics review form was provided. Participants at this time were also informed of the nature and extent of involvement (i.e., number and length of interviews, member checks) as well as the parameters of involvement (i.e., anonymity, confidentiality, right to opt out, right to check interview data before analysis) before permission was granted.
5. Before beginning each interview, respondents were ensured of anonymity and confidentiality. By typing all of the interview transcriptions myself, I was able to provide such a guarantee. All respondents were again reminded of their right to opt out of participation. The importance of participant involvement in on-going member checks of interview transcriptions and draft copies of the study was also discussed. Please see Appendices G, H, and I for copies of cover letters accompanying and explaining the purpose of each member check.

6. As draft versions of the case studies were written (i.e., Chapters 4 and 6), care was taken to include quoted passages that did not jeopardize anonymity and confidentiality. In the draft copies of the case study reports, respondents were assigned pseudonyms. When draft copies were returned, respondents were asked to change pseudonyms if they thought confidentiality and anonymity could be enhanced. Please see Appendix H for an example of the member check cover letter explaining this purpose. All changes suggested through the process of this member check were incorporated into the revised version of each case study report.

7. When draft copies of the case companions (i.e., Chapters 5 and 7) were being written, care was taken to not jeopardize anonymity and confidentiality. When these draft copies were returned for member checks, respondents were asked about ways to further ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Only minor changes were suggested and incorporated. Please see Appendix I for details.

In the case of the pilot study, numbers 1, 3, 4, 5 of the above were undertaken as ethical considerations of the treatment of participants.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made at the outset of this study:

1. The conception of leadership used in this study (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 29) describes the "constructed realities" of selected individuals who inhabit secondary schools that have the reputation for being successful.

2. The perceptions expressed by the individual respondents who participated in this study were sincere and trustworthy accounts of their "constructed realities."

Delimitations and Limitations

1. This study was delimited to the collective case study of two secondary schools. Comparisons between the two cases were not made in a deliberate manner. This aspect of the research design limits, perhaps, the transferability of the findings. Readers must judge for themselves the extent to which the findings from these two case studies are applicable to other settings.

2. This study was delimited as well by the constructivist definition of school leadership (Lambert et al., 1995) that guided data collection and data analysis. This is also a limitation of the study.

3. Analysis and findings are based on data gathered over a five month period and represent the "multiple perceptions" held by selected participants at that point in time.

This is a major delimitation of the study that also limits the applicability of findings in each case to other time periods.

4. Although an attempt was made to include multiple and diverse perspectives in each case, for practical reasons, participation in interviews had to be delimited to those considered key respondents from the staff, student, and parent groups.

Summary

In this chapter, a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology has been provided so that readers will be able to evaluate the potential strengths and weaknesses of this study, as well judge the extent to which this investigation has achieved its stated purpose.

CHAPTER 4

RIVERVIEW SCHOOL CASE STUDY REPORT

This chapter includes key aspects of the inter-relationship among the perceptions of the eight student, two parent, and nine staff respondents from Riverview School. These perceptions have been presented in narrative format and have been organized under the headings: "School as Community;" "Diversity in Community;" "Students . . . ;" "Staff Members . . . ;" "Tensions Within Riverview School;" "Measuring Success;" and "Celebrating Community." These headings correspond to the categories which emerged from the analysis of the data which was undertaken after the data collection from both school sites had been completed.

A summary of the findings from the data analysis conducted prior to writing this case study report can be found in Chapter 8 in the section titled, "Leadership in Riverview School."

School As Community

The Bonding Walk

The bright sun had not yet dissolved the morning chill when the final group of students and teachers returned to the school. The lingering crispness of this late September afternoon seemed to intensify the enthusiasm that had been generated by the 12 kilometer morning walkathon. During the journey, this group of travelers had meandered along muddy paths, across gravel roads, through dying brush, and through freshly harvested fields before eventually reaching the deeply carved river valley and their final destination. There, beside the unassuming but picturesque Credit River, was the rustic picnic area where the student union members were waiting to serve lunch and refreshments to the weary travelers as they arrived. Nourished and contented, students and teachers chatted and joked while they waited to climb aboard the warm bus, that in this final leg of their journey would carry them home.

When I entered the school shortly after noon, I paused to listen to the talk and laughter that filled the hallways. As I stood there trying to decipher what I could from the feeling of excitement that permeated this crowded building, I could not help but be drawn in. Those who had participated in the walkathon were sharing their stories with peers and teachers who had not made the journey, but who were eager to find out "who had done what," and "what had happened to whom." When afternoon classes began, the story-telling flowed from hallways into the library, the staff room, and the lessons that were going on in the classrooms.

In the grade 12 mathematics class I visited that afternoon, I learned that each year the newly elected student union planned a September walkathon and lunch for the entire high school student body. Even though things had gone smoothly this year, there had been challenging moments for the organizers. Craig had forgotten the barbeque lighter for the grills used to cook the hot dogs for lunch. Some people had become too wet and too cold to continue and needed to be driven back to the school before completing the walkathon. These problems seemed unimportant, however. This group of students preferred to review the reasons that made this year's event a success: Almost all of the 115 high school students had joined in the activity; it was cold but it had not snowed; the grade 10s who had hung back and kept to themselves during the first part of the walk eventually joined in the fun; people who did not know each other very well got to know each other better; people who did know each other had a chance to renew acquaintances; and "even Eva who didn't do Monday mornings" had made a point of getting to school in time to take part. Within that mathematics class were the new student union president, vice president, and treasurer. They exuded confidence in the wake of this activity that for them seemed to reaffirm the importance of relationships and community spirit within their high school. "The grade 10s and 11s will now feel comfortable enough to come and tell us what they want us to do for them," proclaimed Kara, the vice president. "We will take their requests to Mr. Wiebe and Mr. Brenneis. They will help us make it happen."

Several staff members also seemed to feel that the high school had become more of a community that morning. Mrs. Tait, the school librarian, had not participated in the event but enjoyed listening to those who had. As people passed through the library that afternoon, her sense was that the morning walk had helped students focus on what they had in common and not on how they were different. She believed that these kinds of activities were important for "leveling the playing field," and suggested that I come out for the Hallowe'en festivities at the end of October. Mr. Wiebe, the student union supervisor, believed the morning activity had gone well because it had been kept simple. "We aren't raising money for anything. The point is to have people spend time together, walking, talking, and getting to know one another." In this school that housed 350 students, grades one through twelve, Mr.

Brenneis was well-known to all; he was "the principal." To the high school students, however, many of whom had been in his mathematics classes, he was more often referred to as "one of the teachers." Mr. Brenneis had been a part of the walkathon, encouraging the participants and attending to those walkers who needed help along the way. He was visibly energized as he explained the importance of the morning event. "It happened," he confirmed. "We've come together. September's over and the grade 10s feel like part of the high school now. By Christmas there will be no more borders."

Travelers Sharing The Journey

Over the course of the afternoon, the stories from the morning's journey were told and retold in classrooms, in hallways, in the staff room~~, and in the lib~~rary. Through the telling and the retelling, it was clear to me why the students fondly referred to this annual event as "the bonding walk." By the end of the afternoon as I was leaving the school, I had the feeling that through it all, I had somehow become a fellow traveler.

Through my conversations and interviews with students, staff, and parents over the time that I spent at Riverview School, I came to understand why individuals valued being a part of this school and why there were "no borders." These people were sharing the same journey, even though their experiences were unique and their final destinations were different.

Diversity In Community

It was a stormy afternoon in mid-September the first time I visited Riverview. As I turned off the highway onto the gravel road leading into the small town, it was easy to pick out the school. The long, low, brick building had a full sized gym on one end, a satellite dish on the roof, and looked a great deal like other schools that had been built during the 1960s. There was a large playing field and community sports complex on the west side of the facility; on the east side, the weather-worn Canadian and Albertan flags flapped rhythmically in the driving rain.

When two young people sitting in a pick-up truck in the student parking area realized that I was unsure of where to park, one of them got out of the truck to come and give me some help and directions. I entered through the rear door and as I stood wondering how to get to the front office, two boys using the microwave oven installed on a small table on the landing between the two stair cases pointed toward the upstairs. They explained that the junior and senior high school classes were on the upper level of the building and that the elementary classes were located on the lower floor near the library. As I looked in the direction of their pointing fingers, I noticed a very large white board onto which the busy September school calendar had been carefully transcribed in blue and red ink. At the foot of the upper stairwell, several pictures of smiling young people and adults all dressed in sport gear were displayed on a bulletin board. Some ambitious photographer had already captured the memorable events and accomplishments of the new school year. Bright blue lockers lined both sides of the upper hallway. Oddly enough, few were locked. Many had doors that had been left open, revealing the housekeeping skills of the teenage occupants. Two or three sports bags, outside coats, lunch bags, and textbooks had been left in front of one bank of lockers.

As I made my way down the hallway, adolescent faces began to appear through the open classroom doors. Some were adorned with ball caps; others simply nodded a welcome; all smiled inquisitively as the principal, Mr. Brenneis, came out of one of the classrooms and walked toward me. His warm greeting, quick smile, and informal conversation put me at ease and resonated with the human energy that I had sensed during these first few minutes in the school building. Mr. Brenneis' offer to show me the school made me feel welcome. He seemed accustomed to receiving visitors and adept at incorporating the duties of host with those of school principal. When people approached us, he made a quick introduction and then excused himself while he turned his attention to the student or staff member who needed help solving a problem, or who had news to share. One of the students from Mr. Brenneis' Math classes was anxious about the test scheduled for that afternoon. Another student wanted to show off his new hair cut. At one point, Mr. Brenneis stopped our tour to inquire about the health of a student who had been absent the day before. With another student, he spent a minute analyzing and discussing the volleyball game that had been lost the night before. A staff member interrupted her light banter with a group of young people in order to update Mr. Brenneis on the Green Project that she and he had undertaken together with a group of students. The five or six conversations that occurred during this official introduction to the school were all different, yet similar. They had all begun with someone asking a question and had all ended with someone speaking words of praise or humor. Twenty minutes later when the tour was brought to a close, I was reminded of the comments that Mr. Brenneis had made a few days earlier. When I had phoned requesting permission to conduct my study in Riverview School, he had encouraged me to, "Come out and have a look." He had cautioned me as well: "We're pretty informal around here. We don't write things down. I don't know if there is much to see."

We finished our conversation inside his office which he jokingly referred to as "a storage room." He explained that it was used for making phone calls and occasionally for disciplining. Teaching kept him in the classroom for one half of the day, and he preferred spending the other half in the hallways and classrooms interacting with staff and students. He pointed out that there was no reason for him to spend any longer in the office since Anne Bennett, the office manager, was there. His appreciation of her efficiency and skills were emphasized through his use of humor. "Anne's the one that really runs this place," he praised. "She keeps us organized. We couldn't do it without her." Anne's warm smile and helpful manner were welcoming. It was her adeptness and grace at moving from one task and challenge to the next, however, that made me think once again of the compelling human energy that I had noticed several times since arriving at the school.

"Go ahead and introduce yourself to people," Mr. Brenneis encouraged. "They're used to having visitors around. They won't notice you coming and going." That was my cue to begin my own exploration of the building. I was surprised to read on a plaque outside the office that there had been a major renovation completed only five years before. The passage of time had not dulled the earth tone colors. They cast a warm and inviting hue in the indirect lighting of the front hallway and office area. Upon descending into the lower hallway, I noticed that the elementary wing was also lined with blue lockers which for the most part were closed but not locked. Some of the students had written their names on brightly colored pieces of paper which they had attached to the doors of their lockers. There were microwaves placed on low tables for easy access outside three of the classrooms on this lower level. It seemed neater, less crowded, and quieter in this hallway where the younger members of the school spent their day.

No More Borders

In the few remaining minutes before noon, I strolled through the upper hallway. Morning activities were wrapping up and students were chatting at lockers while they put books away and grabbed for their lunches. As I passed, some nodded their welcome; some smiled and said hello; many looked at me curiously. Several staff members came out of their classrooms and introduced themselves. Their questions and talk indicated that they had heard I was coming. They knew that I was a colleague as well as a university researcher. One teacher walked with me to the staff room where he offered me coffee. When I asked where to sit, he looked at me surprised and then laughed as he realized what I was implying through my question. "Is it like that in your school?" he asked. "Do people have chairs that they sit in every day? I'd forgotten staff rooms can be like that. Sit where you like." As a kind of postscript, he added, "Anne is the only one who has a specific place. She sits where she can answer the phone." Over the next half hour, busy staff members came and went. As one person vacated a chair at the large square table in the kitchen area, another took up occupancy. Amazingly, all the coming and going of busy people did not interrupt the continuous flow of conversation, teasing, and laughter.

The door to the staff room remained open at all times. Students intermittently appeared in the doorway asking for help with a problem, or wanting to purchase a frozen submarine sandwich they could heat up in one of the microwaves. As kids of all ages walked into the staff area, the adults made them feel welcome, answered their questions, and took turns responding to requests for submarines. The dynamic exchanges between and among people in this staff area were seamless and elegant to watch. As a newcomer, I occasionally felt "out of step," but not out of touch or alien within this energized and energizing environment.

That lunch hour, it was too wet for students to go outside. Near the end of the break, I walked into the gym where I found dozens of elementary, junior, and senior high students who had gathered for a few minutes of recreation before afternoon classes began. The three different peer groups were participating in a variety of activities. I was intrigued by the harmonious way in which this was happening. Over the several minutes that I observed the different groups, they managed to avoid encroaching on one another's space. No one got "squeezed out." No child was "in the way." There was no teasing, pushing, yelling or angry words. There were no arbitrary rules, or artificial boundaries separating these young people. Almost intuitively it seemed, the individuals and groups using the gym that lunch hour recognized and showed respect for each other's space. With the same finesse as I had often admired watching professional hockey, these players maneuvered around the gym and one another without interrupting the flow of conversation and play.

Over the course of the day, I wondered how to describe this place that was becoming comfortable and feeling as much like "home" as "school." In the library during the last period of the afternoon, my impressions began to converge and I was prompted to consider the presence of human energy that was becoming more and more apparent the longer my visit went on. One group of students was sitting on the large cushions and bean bag chairs listening to their teacher who was asking questions and punctuating answers with encouragement and praise. Another group sat at tables, talking and enjoying one another's company as they completed work on a project. Three more students were involved in a conversation with the librarian who was asking questions, calling individuals by name, and smiling warmly as she teased them about something that they had or had not done. Watching these activities, it became clearer that the energy I had detected over the course of the day was being generated through the interactions between and among the young people and the adults who lived, worked, and played together in this school. How had it happened, I wondered, that there were such strong bonds holding people together, yet spaces between individuals where they seemed free to act, learn, and achieve in their own way?

Students . . .

. . . Learning And Achieving

"Mr. Brenneis had to change the whole timetable around for us," one student in the mathematics class stated proudly. "Mr. Brenneis said that if we worked hard this year, we would all be able to graduate. That's why he changed the timetable." One of the grade 10s had a similar story to tell. "Mr. Brenneis made the timetable especially for our class. He had to change the whole thing around after it was finished so that all the grade 10s could take both phys. ed. and drama." All of the students and parents to whom I spoke were very positive about the way that the high school program was scheduled. Each year, the long process of building the timetable started in early April. By circulating successive drafts of the schedule to staff and students and asking for feedback and in-put, Mr. Brenneis constructed a timetable that "came as close as possible" to including individual needs and choices. "If people don't get exactly what they feel they want and need," he explained, "we make sure that they understand the reasons why and then we help them make the choices that they do have." By the end of June, most students were confident in the belief that the timetable for the upcoming year had been created especially for them.

. . . In A Space For Everyone

"Did you see our masks in the library?" asked Taylor. "Mr. Fraser framed my picture. Did you see my picture?" inquired Emily. The group of students who had gathered on the steps near the rear entrance of the building was discussing the fine arts program that was being implemented that fall. "I really like art. I want Mr. Fraser to start a choral program too. I really like choral, "Emily emphasized. When I strolled into the library to investigate what all the excitement was about, Evelyn, a grade 10 student, saw me looking at the display which Mrs. Tait had placed on the wall above the bookcases. "Mr. Fraser is so cool," Evelyn proclaimed. "You should see what we are doing in drama." There had been a band program in the school for quite awhile, but the other fine arts had not been offered for some time. The program was new and many of the junior and senior high school students had selected one of the fine arts options. They were excited about what they were learning.

Five years before, the very successful integrated sports and physical education program had been introduced into the school. "Everyone does sports here even though most of us aren't athletes," Elizabeth had explained during my visit to her mathematics class. "We all do sports because we want to have fun while we learn." For Kara, the vice president of the student union and captain of the volleyball team, sports were a very important part of her school life. "I don't know if I am that good or not," she said modestly. "I like to do all the sports because I feel welcome to try. Most people feel that way. I'd say over eighty per cent are involved in more than one activity." Leanne, a grade 10 student, also liked the sports program and said that she believed that participation was valued as much as athletic ability. "Sports are important in this school. Everyone takes phys. ed. We're all encouraged to get involved and give it a try," she stated.

Student participation levels and positive attitudes toward the sports program confirmed for Mr. Irvin, the coordinator of the program, that they had made the right choice in encouraging broad participation through an inclusive approach. "By offering a broad base program, all kids can be successful," he explained. " I believe that through athletics and sports, we learn lessons about ourselves. We find out things that benefit us throughout our lives. I think that the same thing happens in every program within the school. I've come to realize that kids have their own unique gifts and talents. Some kids have a talent or affinity for one particular activity, but not another."

. . . Have Unique Gifts And Talents

Learning and achievement were the primary focus at Riverview and were shaped by the belief that students came to school with their own unique gifts and talents. The inclusive and innovative programming, as a result, continuously evolved in rhythm with the changes within the student population and with the changes in provincial curricula. Mr. Wiebe who had come from a neighboring high school five years before, made the following comment on the effect of continuous change at Riverview. "I was used to this other system where the system exists and the people have to find ways to fit in. Here at Riverview, it is more like an amoeba that floats around and continually changes depending on whatever the need seems to be." During another conversation about the continuous change going on in the school, Mrs. Tait, the school librarian shared an interesting speculation. "Maybe it is because things are always changing that everyone has so much energy and no one ever gets tired." The belief that change was a solution and not a problem was espoused by the principals, teachers, parents, and students. It was a belief that appeared to have developed over time.

Nine years before when there had been a school evaluation, staff became aware of the need for change. Dropping enrollments and greater course selection at the composite high schools in the nearby cities were drawing students away. The threat of school closure prompted the principals and staff members to consider alternatives in the way that core subjects were offered and delivered. With mathematics being offered over the full year within the semestered high school, for example, students who were stronger in that subject area had the opportunity of accelerating and completing the grade 12 level early. These students appreciated the continuity they experienced by remaining with the same peers and teacher for the year while progressing at their own rate. "We learn better. It's easy," commented one student from the grade 10 class who was completing the course and going on to grade 11 mathematics in semester two. The grade 10 science program also provided for individual differences. Smaller classes that were timetabled over the full year allowed students to achieve at their level while remaining with their peers. By the end of the year, some students completed the advanced science credit while others who found learning the sciences more difficult, received the first of two credit requirements for their high school graduation diploma.

Innovation in programming and timetabling were particularly evident in the area of complementary course offerings and delivery. In order to provide a greater selection of options, a staff member had been hired to coordinate and track student progress in Alberta Education Distance Learning courses taken through the school. This individualized learning program helped free up time for other courses and activities offered within the school. "Most students take at least one or two distance education courses at high school," Craig informed me. "It's easy," he continued. "You go see Mrs. Jones in the library and sign up. She sets you up with the lessons and you work them in during your spares or in class when you finish your other work. Teachers are always there to help you and to make sure that you get it done." The teachers marked most of the distance learning lessons and were supportive of students learning in this manner. The completion rate for these courses was over ninety per cent, well above average for this provincial program. The occasional student who fell behind was required to spend his or her spare time in a desk outside of the main office while catching up. There was no shortage of attention as passing teachers stopped to inquire and praise the progress of any student who needed support while learning in this individualized way.

The career and technology studies program being implemented within the school also provided for individual learning. "When I came ten years ago, the business education program was dying," Sandra Delaney stated in her matter of fact way. As lead teacher in the implementation process for the mandatory career and technology studies program, Sandra felt prepared for this current challenge because of her previous experiences with innovation. "Mr. Brenneis and I decided that we had to do something to save the business education program," she continued. "We knew that if we didn't change the way we offered the courses, most kids wouldn't be able to take them." She explained that this situation had prompted her to prepare individualized learning modules which corresponded to the various curricula which fell under the business education umbrella. By approaching instruction in this way, she was able to have students within one class working on a variety of subjects and modules at the same time. A similar approach had since been adopted by Alberta Education program planners for the delivery of the Careers and Technology Studies.

As Sandra was talking, she pointed to the large sheets of paper with module headings and the 115 high school students' names on them. They were displayed on the walls in the area that had formerly been known as the business education room, but which some people were now calling "the computer room." These sheets were used to help students and teachers keep track of completed modules and those in progress. She emphasized the importance of this collaborative tracking system as class sizes and options increased. "In the first period, for example, I have 31 students in this room taking computers 10, keyboarding 10, keyboarding 20, record keeping 10, and accounting 10 and 20." Students liked the variety and flexibility of the career and technology studies program. "It all comes down to respect," Sandra concluded. "Students realize that I am not going to be able to watch them all the time. They realize that it's up to them to make it work." Within the framework of an inclusive timetable and innovative high school program, there were "spaces" where students were free to make choices and explore their unique gifts and talents. It was "up to them to make it work."

. . . In The Spaces Between People

"You can be who you want to be. We have an incredible amount of freedom here." Elizabeth spoke the words quickly, as though she were stating the obvious. She smiled encouragingly when she saw that I had not completely understood her explanation. "We're not really competitive with one another. The only pressure you feel is the pressure to beat yourself." That lunch hour, she was completing an English essay on the Shakespearean tragedy, Hamlet. The essay was due the following day. The piles of highlighted notes that she had laid out around her, indicated she was feeling pressured not only to complete, but to do her best.

When I had visited and spoken with Elizabeth's mathematics class a few days before, she had acted as the unofficial spokesperson. In answering one of my questions about the school, she had claimed, "We all fit in someplace. You don't have to put on an act to be the most popular or whatever, because none of us is like that. Everyone respects each other." Her final comment seemed to resonate with comments made by others as well as with the observations that I was making. There were definite advantages for most of these students who had spent all of their public school years at Riverview School. Continuity of teachers and programming appeared to support student confidence and contribute to individual student development. "By the time they get to high school, they know where the line is," explained Sandra Delaney as she accounted for the students' ability to be self-directed within this open high school environment.

At Riverview School, there was a relaxed and informal environment in which individuals seemed to flourish. Most students found the expectations reasonable and accepted the responsibilities that accompanied what Elizabeth and others referred to as their "incredible amount of freedom." Attendance did not appear to be an issue for either the staff or students. One student elaborated; "There is an understanding. If you miss something because you are skipping, then it's your own fault. You won't be able to do as well in the course." Students also appeared to take ownership for getting homework done and for keeping up in their school work. "Students know that if they have a practice or a game at night that they will be out late. They realize that they will have to take care to get their homework done ahead of time," explained Mr. Irvin, head coach of the volleyball teams. "They all seem to be able to get themselves organized to get their work done before the practices and games."

As students were setting and attaining their personal goals at school, they were also learning appropriate ways in which to exercise their freedom. They were learning to recognize their own strengths and limitations within this school community bounded only by their respectful and trusting relationships with peers and staff. When making difficult choices or decisions, they would often seek out the help and advice of their peers. As learners within this environment of freedom took risks, made their choices, and found their own paths to personal achievement, they would often turn to fellow students who shared their journey in order to help make sense of each others' experiences, and in order to help each other learn.

. . . As Fellow Travelers Sharing The Journey

"The kids are all there for each other. It doesn't matter what happens or who has a problem. They all look after one another," Arlene Smith stated emphatically. Her oldest child had graduated from Riverview the year before. Her younger daughter, Evelyn, was in grade 10 and she had a son in grade eight in the school. In her view, the supportive attitude of friends and peers was one of the strengths of the school. Arlene had worked in another school system within a nearby city for several years. She felt confident making comparisons. "It's not like that in other schools," she explained. "Our kids at Riverview are lucky and they know it."

All eight of the students whom I interviewed during the time I spent at Riverview School spoke about the importance of their relationships with their peers. They were not necessarily all friends, but they seemed to respect one another enough to ask and receive support and advice as it was needed. "We may have our disagreements," explained Elizabeth, "but we all get along. If we have a problem, we talk to our friends and help each other out. There is always someone there to listen. It's like family here." As a grade 12 student, Kara felt that it was important for her to "help others along as she had been helped." Leanne, a grade 10 student who had recently been elected to the student council executive, believed that age differences among students within the high school "didn't matter. I am friends with everyone," she added with quiet confidence.

Several students placed tremendous value on their individual friendships with peers and often turned to them to broaden their own perspective and understanding of life's experiences. Lynda and Emily were two grade 11 girls who shared a supportive friendship. "We've been glued together since we arrived here over a year ago," said Lynda rather proudly. "If Emily is having a problem, she'll talk to me, and if I'm having a problem, I'll talk to Emily." Lynda tried to explain to me that Emily and she were more than friends; they were confidantes. "Last year when my boyfriend and I broke up it was really hard on me. I came to school one day and Mr. Brenneis looked at me and said, 'Go get Emily. I know that you're going to want to talk to her about it, so go and get her and go for coffee in the cafe.'" This kind of friendship was an achievement that others in the school, including the principal, seemed to recognize and respect. Friendships provided one more context for learning.

There appeared to be two common places where most of the high school students gathered. Those with spares collected on the stairs of the landing between the upper and lower hallways near the rear entrance and the student parking lot. "The back stairs is our area," one student said possessively. "The school's crowded this year and we don't have enough room for a student lounge anymore," she continued. "That's where we eat our lunch. That's where we sit during our spares. That's where we play our music." A great deal of conversation, laughter and fun went on in this very small area at any one time during the day. It was a place where "most people intermingled," explained one grade 12 student. Everyone could find out what had happened and was happening within the school by passing by the back stairs and getting in on the conversation going on at that particular moment. The other area where students congregated to talk, discuss issues, and enjoy the camaraderie of peers was in a small local restaurant to which students fondly referred as "the cafe." During the lunch hour, groups of students headed off to the cafe where they shared tables and sometimes seats; they would sit on the floor if they had to in order to be part of the group. There didn't appear to be any secrets or embarrassment between or among these students. Through the supportive dialogue with peers, academic and personal concerns were discussed and problems were solved. Although each student appeared to accept the responsibility of being a self-directed learner, none learned in isolation. There were connections in the spaces between people. The human energy of which I had become aware that first day in the school emanated in part from the informal relationships between and among the adolescents within Riverview School.

Staff Members . . .

. . . As Guides

"Once they get to know you well enough, they know exactly how to treat you and what will move you to want to learn," said Anthony rather thoughtfully after sitting for a few minutes reflecting on the question. "They're more like equals than teachers. They care about our ideas and not just what's in the book," added Elizabeth. When I asked students to describe their teachers, there were no one word answers. The list of descriptors included "guide," "coach," and "counselor," but not "mother," or "father." Although comparisons to such family members as "aunts or uncles" were made by some, no student seemed to view their teachers in the same way that they did their "parents." On most occasions when asked to describe their teachers, students hesitated as they searched for ways to aptly portray the unique relationships that seemed to be complex and layered in each case. In the minds of these students, the teachers were all "different," and were not simply "official school personnel." Students and teachers repeatedly described interactions which were constantly evolving within a context of mutual respect and appreciation of one another's individuality.

"I think Mr. Wiebe was probably like me when he was growing up," one admiring student stated. "He makes it easy to learn. He brings in examples from his life and his family when he is teaching." One student enjoyed her conversations with the librarian. "Mrs. Tait is the greatest," she said enthusiastically. "She always knows what's going on around the school." "I'm really close to Mrs. Delaney," stated one of the grade 12 students. "I can tell her anything. I had her for grade three social studies, so we've been really close."

Humor seemed to be an important part of the human interactions both inside and outside of the classrooms. "Mr. Jordon likes to tell us about his cows. They're his pets," giggled a group of students. "Somehow he finds a way to use them as examples for everything we're learning in biology class." In the spaces between people at Riverview School, the relationships students had with staff members helped them to connect to school, to learning, and to life.

In classrooms, teachers used a variety of methods to challenge, guide, and nudge each student forward along his or her own path. There was no one lesson plan directing these classes where teacher and students worked in consort toward the common goal of individual achievement. "Teachers never make you feel stupid," said David, a grade 10 student who was new to the school. His decision to come to Riverview School had been influenced by the positive comments that he had heard about the teachers. "The teachers here will answer the same question over and over until you get it. They tell you to keep asking questions until you get it." I wondered if David's remarks were indicative of the essence of teaching and learning at this school. In this environment of respectful and trusting relationships, were students more confident to take risks, ask their questions, and pursue personal goals, whatever they might be? Was this why they felt encouraged to achieve and why they felt successful?

"In the learning process, control doesn't have to be there. Kids just have to have encouragement," claimed Anthony rather insightfully. "It's different here than in other schools. Teachers don't force you to learn. They make you want to learn. They really make you want to learn." Anthony repeated the last phrase to make sure that I had understood the importance of his statement before concluding: "That's why so many kids do so well here."

. . . As Counselors

"Thanks for the coffee, Mrs. Tait," said Lynda as she swallowed her last mouthful. "Talk to you later, and thanks," added Emily as she returned her empty cup to its rightful position on the window ledge inside the small office. Mrs. Tait smiled warmly at both young women and offered one more word of support before wishing them a good day and walking with them out of the small room adjacent to the main library. That first day during my last period visit to the library, I had noticed the brightly decorated styrofoam cups with various students' names scratched into the surface by a pen. That particular morning, I had come looking for Laura Tait, the library technician whose name came up over and over again in the student interviews which I was conducting. As Laura escorted me into the office, I could see why all of the students liked coming here and why they felt so comfortable. Lining the counter below the window which looked out into the library was a coffee maker, a variety of flavored coffees, and an even larger variety of treats. With Hallowe'en only a few days away, orange and black candies seemed to be popular and in abundance. "Mrs. Tait's really close to all of the students," one grade 12 student had informed me. "They tell her everything, and she always takes time to listen." One of the grade 10 students when speaking about her teachers had focused on Laura Tait in particular. "She really cares about us as people." When I spoke with Laura, her concern and affection for the students were apparent:

> "They're all 'my kids.' If a student comes to school with a problem and needs someone to talk to, I think it's really important that they have someone who can take the time to talk. I am happy they feel comfortable enough to come and ask for the help that they need. They know that I am a neutral person, that I am not going to be teaching or evaluating them. Students need to feel they belong."

There were no designated guidance counselors on staff, and yet it seemed that all of the adults within the school were committed to providing support to students when it was needed. "They're always there for us," stated Leanne. "They treat us like adults. I could go to any of my teachers if I had a problem and they would help."

. . . As Coaches

One afternoon, Mrs. Miller invited me to come and talk to her English class about jobs and careers. Before I began, Brenda Miller set the tone by prompting this group of learners. "You don't want to leave this until the last minute, " she advised. "What could you do to get ready? How could you prepare in advance?" she probed. Patiently, she repeated and reworded her questions until some of the students felt confident enough to answer. "That's a really good idea," she praised in response to one answer. "That's something I hadn't thought of," she said, inadvertently flattering another one of the students who answered. Through her questions and encouraging words, I watched her skillfully create a context for my presentation and an environment in which these students were ready to learn. The relationships between teachers and students in the classrooms and hallways as well as in the gymnasium often seemed to be that of coach and players.

"We get praised for what we do well. No one dwells on the bad," explained Kara. She was referring to student performance in the classroom and on the volleyball and basketball courts. The night before, the senior girls had lost their volleyball game against a rival school in front of a home crowd. Kara, as captain of the team, knew that team members would have to talk about the mistakes and shortcomings of the game before concentrating on the next game. By focusing on encouragement and not dwelling on the "bad," she felt confident that the team could meet its goal. What was crucial for Kara and her teammates was to play their best, to "beat themselves."

Almost all staff members were involved in the coaching of one sport or another within the extra-curricular sports program. Learning occurred within the coaching relationships between students and teachers. "Work before play. Work has to get done first," stated Mr. Irvin who had taught and coached most of the high school students in physical education classes as well as in sports. "It's up to the students to set personal goals and then find ways to go after them, in academics and in sports. I think that we help them learn how to do that at this school."

. . . The Principals

Although my study focused on the high school only, I found it difficult to distinguish those staff members and school programs that were uniquely "high school." The elementary, junior high, and high schools seemed to blend within Riverview School. Several teachers taught at one, two, or three of the different levels. The roles of principal and vice principal also seemed to blend. Al Brenneis who carried the official title of principal oversaw program, staff, and students in the elementary and senior high schools. Greg Jordon, the vice principal, took responsibility for the junior high school and the Integrated Occupational Program. "They view Mr. Brenneis and Mr. Jordon as teachers more than principals," stated Mrs. Jackson, a parent with three children attending Riverview School.

The high school students and staff looked to Mr. Brenneis as a combination of guide, counselor, and coach. He seemed to embody all of the characteristics attributed to the other teachers, simultaneously. Mrs. Jackson was not only a parent of children within Riverview School, she was also a former student. It was with admiration that she described how Mr. Brenneis had changed since he had been her high school mathematics teacher. "I think that he's gotten a little easier on students. They can answer him back. Not 'back talk,' but answer in a way that we would never have done at that point in time." She explained the change in the following way; "He really listens to the kids talk. They respect him. I am sure that they tell him things that we would never have thought of telling a teacher." One of the grade 11 girl's stories seemed to confirm what Mrs. Jackson believed to be true:

> "I like this school because they know you on a personal basis. With my problem today I went straight to Mr. Brenneis. He didn't say, 'You should go to class.' He took me down to his office and talked to me about my problem. He didn't favor my parents' side or my side. He put things into their perspective and then into my perspective and made me realize my choices. He's a good person to talk to because he acts like a friend and not a principal. If he has to talk to you he doesn't embarrass you in front of 20 people. He'll just ask you nicely to come down to the office to talk where there is privacy.
>
> Last year, we got into trouble for misbehaving for a substitute teacher in phys ed. He came in and was yelling a bit as principals are supposed to do. Afterwards when he had finished, he said to us, 'Now in all fairness, is there anything that you would like to yell at me about?' He gives you a chance to say what happened. He takes all perspectives. It made us all feel better that time because he listened to us. He accepted our point of view as being equal to that of the teacher's."

The roles of coach, guide, and counselor came together and were most apparent during the discipline episodes. Mr. Brenneis handled most of the discipline and all parent concerns at Riverview. By assuming these responsibilities, he believed that teachers were free to concentrate on building positive relationships with the students. "If the students have to be mad at someone, I prefer that they be mad at me," Al Brenneis explained. "I handle the discipline so that the teachers can stay friends with the kids, and so the kids can continue to be friendly with their teachers." William Fraser, the new fine arts teacher on staff, felt that the principal had a special talent for getting students to recognize how counter-productive inappropriate behavior could be. He referred to one student for whom he had requested disciplining. When that student returned to class, he appeared to have "made a decision in a positive way." According to William, the student had returned to class with a positive attitude prepared, to try to meet his expectations as teacher. "Problems with students are dealt with quickly here and are not allowed to fester. As far as I can see, that's why there aren't many discipline problems," concluded William.

One afternoon I had the chance to witness one of these discipline scenarios. When Mr. Brenneis showed a student "the door," that student knew that his or her freedom was on the line and that there was only one choice remaining. On this particular afternoon, one of the students had been acting inappropriately in an English class. "When you come through that door," Al Brenneis started, " you leave the rest behind. You come here to learn, and if you don't come here to learn, . . . you don't come here." As I listened to Al Brenneis and watched the student, I sensed the student's discomfort, but observed a change as he began to understand the principal's intent. "Why do you come to Riverview School?" Mr. Brenneis coached. As the student began to reply, he raised his eyes and spoke with the confidence and the humility that come from an acceptance that it is time "to turn things around." "I understand, Mr. Brenneis," the student said. "I'll do it. I'll go and apologize. I'll get back in." With that utterance, Al Brenneis' facial expression relaxed and a smile erupted. "You can get the job done. You can do it, so go out there and do it." His supportive praise seemed to provide some relief for the young man standing in front of him. As the student walked away, his shoulders appeared to straighten with his newly found resolve. Al Brenneis was convinced, as was I as an observer, that this young man "would try."

Any student who floundered within the freedom of this environment was symbolically walked to the door and reminded of the expectations for learning and achieving at Riverview School. All of the students and the teachers had seen this scenario. Typically, the high school students would watch these episodes with detached interest. Their days of misbehaving were a memory only. "The only time I got yelled at it wasn't really my fault," reminisced one grade 12 student. "Mr. Brenneis didn't give us the chance to explain ourselves and I was a little ticked off. I went to his office to explain what had happened," she continued, as if it were the norm for students to approach the principal in this manner when they were upset with a decision. "We had a big discussion and he ended up apologizing." In the mind of this student and many others, their principal was an adult who was skilled at listening as they together figured out events and experiences. Guide, coach, and counselor seemed appropriate ways to describe the interactions between Al Brenneis and the other members on staff as well.

. . . As Their Own Boss

"Al is the best boss that I have ever worked for. I use the term boss loosely because I never see the man. He lets me run the library the way I need to run it." Laura Tait had enjoyed working in other schools, but she liked the freedom she had being part of the Riverview School staff. She explained how in spite of her autonomy, she also felt supported in what she did. "If I have a question about the library, Al doesn't say, 'This is what you should do.' He'll say, 'Have you thought about it this way?' He lets me say what I need to say, asks me questions to get me thinking of different ways to solve my problems, gives me the support I need, and never tells me what to do." Other staff members had similar stories to tell.

"I set the rules for my classroom and I am supported in that," explained Don McLeod. My expectations for students in grade 10 science are the same as they are for students in grade 12 physics. I expect them to be respectful of one another, to work hard, and to come to me for assistance if they need help. In terms of the administration, there is a lot of freedom," he continued. "They know that I will do things within the boundaries of the school. Here, everyone has the right to be heard and be respected, and the responsibility of listening and respecting others." When I asked Don McLeod who else on staff I should speak with, he appeared to be stating the obvious when he said, "Everyone has their own perspective. Almost all the staff members would bring a different view."

Sandra Delaney also felt free and supported in making the rules and setting the expectations for students in her social studies and career and technology studies classes. "If I am unsure of something, I will go to Al Brenneis and talk with him. He might ask me about my decision, but he trusts me. It's really nice to know that I can make my own decisions and that he's there for my backing when I need it." Sandra, a part time teacher with two small children, felt that she had the "best of both worlds." Instead of coaching in the extra-curricular sports program as most of her colleagues were doing, she had chosen to work with the distance education students and mark their learning modules. This allowed her a great deal of flexibility. She was also devoting considerable time to looking at ways to facilitate the integration of some of the optional subject areas. This had been a project that was supported by the principals, particularly because it would help when it came to timetabling for the following year; it would create more options and choices for more students.

When Roger Irvin had started at Riverview School five years before, he was asked to implement and coordinate the broad-based physical education program. Roger described how he had identified and set the 28 objectives that had since been accomplished and which underlay the successful physical education program:

> "I spent a lot of time sitting, thinking, and looking at what was here. I went to Al Brenneis and said, 'Here are some of the things that I would like to see us be able to do in the next 10 years or so.' He encouraged me to go after those objectives, and things have fallen into place much more quickly than either of us thought."

Bob Wiebe and Al Brenneis had previously taught together for ten years as colleagues in another school. The standing joke between them, according to Bob, was that during those ten years that they had taught together, they had "only ever agreed twice." Although both had different perspectives, their view of students was similar and it was evident that they had a great deal of respect for each other. "Our differences have been a strength," confirmed Bob. "We value each other's diversity." As the supervisor for the high school student union, Bob was responsible for helping student executive members plan events like "the bonding walk." Activities at Hallowe'en, at Christmas, and at the end of the year were other examples of annual events to which Bob referred as bonding moments. "We've struggled over the years to keep these events simple," he continued. "We've always maintained that the main reason for having extra-curricular programs is to provide a different facet of education for these kids. We're not out to win trophies or draw new students to the school." High participation levels indicated that students attached a great deal of importance to these events. "The kids love seeing those pictures down at the end of the hallway," he added. "As we progress through the year and special events, the number of pictures increases." At one point, Bob used the following analogy to describe his own outlook on life and to further explain why he enjoyed working with the staff at Riverview School:

> "There are people who aren't enjoying the journey. They're just looking at the destination. I don't look at the destination. I don't care if I 'get there or not' because I am really enjoying what I am doing right now. It helps when there are a lot of people to work with, who have the same vision."

"These are the people who make it work," emphasized Al Brenneis. "It's not just me or Greg. To make things happen in a school, you have to have the right people. These are the right people. These are the people who have put their heart and soul into making this school work," he concluded proudly.

Early on in his teaching career, Al Brenneis had had an experience which had shaped the way that he thought about the school principalship. He had been ready to give up on teaching and try something else. A principal whom he respected had heard about Al's decision to leave teaching and had asked him to come and work in the school where he was principal. He agreed to allow Al the freedom to do things his own way without interference, and with administrative support. Al described the impact of this experience:

> "I liked the feeling of being my own boss. I liked feeling free to make my own decisions and choices. That's how I learn the best. I thought if I was ever a school principal I would try and give students and staff the opportunity to have that same experience. You have to be prepared for people to make mistakes. That's how we learn. The only people who don't make mistakes are those who don't do anything."

He concluded this particular conversation with some of his beliefs about school administration:

> "I like staff members who are hard working and straightforward. Some might even be people who others would consider 'difficult.' These are the kind of people, I find, who are the workers and the innovators. You just have to turn them loose and let them be their own boss."

In the spaces between people at Riverview School there was room for individual staff members to be innovative, take risks, make mistakes, and become "their own boss."

. . . As Fellow Travelers

"The positive energy around here is contagious," smiled William Fraser. "Have you noticed it?" he asked. When he arrived that September as the new fine arts teacher, he knew that he was coming to a school with a very good reputation. "I had heard a lot of very positive things about Riverview. I thought I was coming to a super school." Although he initially felt intimidated by what he thought the expectations might be, he was relieved once he was welcomed into what he termed "the comfortable and laid back atmosphere of the school." William believed that the expectations were high for both students and teachers. As I listened to him talk, I was reminded of the conversation that I had had with other teachers. "You don't feel pressured into doing things, " he explained, "you feel like you 'want' to do well, for the students and for yourself."

William felt supported by the administration in implementing the new fine arts program within the school. "I have never received a no or a negative," he said. "When you get that positive reaction, then what you want to do is make the best of what you've got. You want to be part of that positive energy." He was collaborating with several other teachers as he established the fine arts program within the school. "Everyone is helpful. I've never heard anyone complain about being over-worked. I feel confident to go and ask for help if I need it, and I enjoy helping out where I can." He and one other teacher were working on the social studies 10 program together. William pointed out what he believed was the strength of this kind of collegial sharing. "We can arrive at the same conclusion by way of our own individual paths. Working together gives us ideas."

William was also working collaboratively with the students as he established the new drama program. "I didn't know what the senior high students wanted from the course. The last month I have been putting out feelers and testing different approaches and media to find out what kind of things will work." As he explained the progress that he felt had been made, he stated rather emphatically, "I am a firm believer in publishing in the fine arts. If more artists published their work, they would get a lot more excited about what they were doing. It makes you feel so much better about yourself and your abilities." He illustrated his point by telling the story of Irene, one of the grade 10 drama students. At first, she had been scared to death by the thought of performing in front of an audience. She was just beginning to realize that it was safe to take some risks. "You can see a little smile on her face now when you compliment her," explained William. "When I see that 'little spark' in somebody, I feel really good," he concluded. It was evident with this final remark that the "spark" had happened within this teacher as well as within his student.

From other comments made by colleagues, such "sparks" occurred with some frequency within Riverview School. This realization brought me an even greater appreciation of the presence of human energy that I had noticed within the school beginning the first day of my stay. "I think that we are 'energy people' around here," observed Sandra Delaney. "As teachers, we feed off of one another. It spills over to the kids. Because we are in a smaller school, we know that we all have to get along, that we have to accept one another for a long time. We look at problems in that context. There is always a way to get around problems and make things work."

"The teachers are terrific. They all work together. There is no feeling of us and them, or us against the kids that I have sometimes felt in other schools. Here it's more like, 'we're all in it together,' students and staff." Although it was Laura Tait who had made these remarks, similar statements were made by other staff members. "Here we all want what is best for the school," confirmed Bob Wiebe, "whether it is for us individually, or us as a collective unit."

These staff members worked in collaboration with colleagues and students to guarantee that learning and achievement remained the primary focus within the school. Over the months that I spent in Riverview School, I was often reminded of a quotation about teachers from the work of the playwright George Bernard Shaw:

I am not a teacher: only a fellow-traveler of whom you asked the way. I pointed ahead--ahead of myself as well as of you. (George Bernard Shaw)

As fellow travelers, staff members guided and coached each other as well as the young people with whom they lived and worked, by "pointing ahead."

Tensions Within Riverview School

Only One Rule

Through my conversations and interviews with students, staff, and parents at Riverview School, I came to understand why people liked their school. In the stories and descriptions, I heard over and over again how individuals felt valued, supported, accepted, and free to be themselves and take risks in this environment where people cared for and respected one another. Sandra Delaney who had worked with Al Brenneis for ten years explained that, "When Mr. Brenneis took over as principal of the school, he was much more rule-based. There was a lot more disciplining in those earlier years. Once the pattern was established and everyone understood it, we moved away from the rules. We have an atmosphere of respect now. We don't need written rules anymore." In Riverview, there was only one rule with multiple applications and interpretations.

When I caught up with Emily in the library Tuesday afternoon, she looked uncomfortable. It's not that she had been avoiding me, she explained. It was just that she felt pressured to finish several assignments that were overdue and for which she had already been granted extensions. "Report cards are coming out soon," Emily went on, "If I get these assignments in to Mrs. Delaney by the end of today my mark will be a lot better." The year before when Emily was making the decision about which high school to attend, she chose to drive the 30 kilometers a day from her home in the nearby city to this small town school. "Everyone knows me here," she said with pride. Before going to class that Tuesday morning, she had stopped to talk to Mr. Brenneis in the office. "He listens and helps me see all sides of an issue. I can get mad at him and he can get mad at me, but at the end before I leave, he'll say, 'We're still friends, right?'" Even though she had not had a lot of sleep the previous night, Emily had come to school that morning because she trusted people here to listen to her and care. Here, she could talk to peers and adults in confidence. They would play the devil's advocate, perhaps, to help her see all sides of the issue before she ultimately made a decision or took action, but they would not judge her. She had had problems in school before and was anxious that I understand why she had been successful here. As pressured as she felt, it was important that she continue to achieve in order to feel successful. Before I left Emily to continue her work, I asked her why she liked school even when it made her life so hectic.

> "It's the freedom. I come here to relax. As long as you treat others like you want to be treated, and respect other people's property, there are no rules. There is only one rule and that's respect."

All misdemeanors within the school were judged in terms of the one rule. Although there were several corollaries to, and interpretations of, this rule, "respect" was the word that all students and all teachers used, understood, and accepted. "Teachers respect students and each other, and students respect teachers and each other. We like to keep it simple and something that everyone can understand," explained Greg Jordon, the vice principal. Any transgressions, as a result, were interpreted by students and staff as "disrespect" or "betrayal of trust." If students, for example, wore their hats in the library where Mrs. Tait did not allow hats, they were guilty of not showing respect for Mrs. Tait. If students misbehaved in class, they were guilty of being disrespectful toward peers and teacher. "Students know when they've done something that isn't right," explained Mrs. Tait. "You don't have to argue or explain. They know, and they usually want to correct it."

"I've noticed that there have been sun flower seed shells appearing in the hallways and in some of the classrooms, " stated Mr. Brenneis over the intercom one day. "I would appreciate your help in dealing with this. These shells are really hard for the caretaking staff to clean up. Let's show respect for these people who work hard to keep our school clean." This announcement occurred on a Tuesday morning and by that afternoon, all signs of the "spitz" had disappeared.

Over the six months that I spent studying the school, there were several transgressions of the "only rule." In most instances, inappropriate behavior or wrong-doing was recognized and corrected by the individual perpetrator. This was not always the case, however, and sometimes there were greater ramifications.

The Issue Of Trust

In mid-October, there came another announcement over the intercom. This time it concerned missing lunches. "Some lunches have gone missing from lockers. We don't need to know who has been taking the lunches, but this will stop immediately." The unlocked and open lockers in the upper hallway had proven too much of a temptation for some. Bagged lunches were disappearing. Mrs. Jackson's daughter Tammy had lost several lunches in the past few weeks. "I went into the school one day and I talked to Mr. Brenneis about it," she said. "It wasn't long before lunches were staying in the lockers."

Other items like watches and gym shoes occasionally went missing as well. The students and parents believed that these thefts were a betrayal of trust within the school community. Putting locks on lockers was not the way, in their mind, to solve the larger issue of trust. "We know who's taking the lunches," claimed Kara one afternoon. "We know and we've told him to stop. It'll stop. He is going to have to respect other people's property," she concluded, smiling with calm confidence. Students considered theft a school issue for which they shared responsibility with the principals.

When visiting teams from other schools used the Riverview School change rooms, occasionally things "went missing." When the Riverview teams traveled to other schools for competitive sporting events, they sometimes had possessions "go missing." In treating others as they expected to be treated, students from Riverview were at times vulnerable and victims of those who did not understand the basic tenets of mutual "respect" and "trust."

Newcomers And Outsiders

Newcomers to the school did not always find it easy adjusting to an environment where there was a great deal of freedom, individual responsibility, and no written rules. Students, staff, and parents seemed to be aware that some people had experienced difficulty fitting in at first.

One of the grade 12 students who had been in the school since kindergarten, reminisced about occasions when her class had not been as welcoming as they could have been. She commented that, "There have been newcomers, but it always takes awhile for us to get to know them. It always starts that way. Having newcomers has helped us all grow up a bit. We've learned a lot from them." David, a grade 10 student who was new to the school this year was feeling a bit disconnected. This was the first time that the school had had too many grade 10 registrants for one class. The group had been split into two classes at the beginning of the year. David remarked that there was no real connection between the two classes and that as a newcomer he sometimes felt like an outsider. "I don't have a problem with being in grade 10 because I am with my friends, but some of the other grade 10s aren't as accepted yet." Several staff members believed that new students usually learned what the expectations were within the school by watching the other students and by asking questions. "The other kids let them know what's going on," explained one teacher. "By Christmas, you can no longer tell who the newcomers are."

Some of the students whom I interviewed felt that there were divisions within the student body; that there were cliques. One grade 12 student felt that everyone got along well, but she also believed that there were some students who felt like outsiders:

> "I think that there are different groups, but we still communicate with each other. People who don't do too well in sports, for example, still talk to the other people. Athletics are a big part of our school, so athletes get recognized. Scholars also get recognized. If you do sports or academics, you get recognized in the school."

Other students as well felt that some students might feel like outsiders. "We are all so different," offered one student rather insightfully.

Withdrawal

Occasionally, the tension that occurred because of individual differences led to the temporary or permanent withdrawal of people. Near the beginning of September, two new students from a neighboring school had been transferred to Riverview so that they could enroll in the Integrated Occupational Program. Over the course of a few weeks, it became apparent that the students had been "misplaced" in the IO program and that they required a more rigorous academic program with more structure. After becoming disinterested in the IO program in which they had enrolled, both students together became involved in several minor infractions. The "final straw" occurred when they skipped class to smoke cigarettes in another student's car that was parked in the student parking area. After this final incident, they were required to leave Riverview and return to their former school. Even students who had been friends with the newcomers believed it was fair and necessary for the principals to ask them to leave. The girl whose car the students had used for smoking was angry that the two boys had not shown more respect for her property. "I should not have to lock up my car when I am at school," she said. "They went into my car and burnt two holes in the seat of it." She felt that the principals had been supportive of her rights by withdrawing the two young men and by reimbursing her the money she had paid in order to fix the burn holes in the car seat. "I am sorry that they got kicked out of school," she commented, "but they can't treat people's property like that." The two principals were also sorry that the two young men had had to be withdrawn.

"They would have made it if they had come into the regular program," explained Al Brenneis and Greg Jordon. "They were misplaced in the IO program."

One other young man had been asked to leave the school the year before for a more serious infraction. This expulsion had been a rare, shocking, but accepted occurrence within this school community. Parents, staff, and students knew of the incident and sometimes talked about it. Now that the young man had returned to school and was catching up for the time that he had missed, his peers seemed supportive of him. "We all mess up," said one female student. "We're trying to help make him feel comfortable." When I spoke with this young man, he realized how important it was for him to be able to finish high school at Riverview where the teachers knew him, and where he felt he could learn. "Lots of kids don't realize how lucky they are," he told me. "Unless you're extremely stupid as I was last year, you don't really want to leave Riverview." He was going to graduate with his class in June and planned to "set a positive example" for others in hope of rebuilding his reputation among the people whom he respected. Belonging, being accepted, and making a positive contribution to this school community were crucial to this young person. The worst that could happen in his mind, and in the view of the others who had watched, was to withdraw or be asked to leave Riverview School.

Inclusion

"You seem to meet a wide range of human needs within the school," I had commented. "Oh yes, they are all here," Greg Jordon replied. "Many students feel like they have a family here at school. I think that they appreciate that." The school worked extensively with community agencies such as the Social Services to help keep troubled kids in school. "Some of these kids come with a lot of baggage. It seems to have gotten more serious over time," Greg explained. "We try and offer all of our students a comfortable place to learn where they can feel at home." I had been surprised to find out that this rural high school encountered social challenges similar to the ones found in the larger urban and suburban high schools. Riverview School housed the same human complexities as any other community of people that endeavored to create a valued and valuable place for all of its citizens.

Government Mandated Changes

"I intend to plant the seed a little more," grinned Don McLeod. "Publishing student test results could hurt the schools and hurt the kids if parents and school staffs within the system start making comparisons." Don McLeod was referring to an announcement that had been made at the staff meeting a few days earlier. The Alberta Government's Three Year Business Plan For Education required that schools and school districts publish the student results from standardized examinations. With the mandated implementation of school site-based management, individual schools were required to create three year plans of their own. "Is there anyone who minds if I put something together and then circulate it for you all to have a look at?" Al Brenneis asked teachers at the October staff meeting. No one minded. "I'll put out a few drafts," Al added later, "to make sure that everyone has a chance for in-put." Although the two principals at Riverview were confident that they would, with time, make the necessary adjustments required as their district moved to school site-based management, they had some concerns.

Over the past several years, Al Brenneis and Greg Jordon had adopted a business approach in the way that they administered the school. "Efficiency" in their school administrative model had come to mean the manner in which individuals' needs were satisfied. Students within their business model were the "clients," not the "products" of a system. The "public" in their education model referred to the parents, students, and community whom they served. As Greg talked about the current changes being implemented within his school district and the province, he expressed concern for the smaller schools in neighboring communities that might be threatened with school closures. He believed that closing these schools would have an impact on Riverview that would not be entirely positive. "It's something like keeping the local store open," he explained. "You don't see the value until it's gone and then you see. It's more far-reaching than you first think and then what first appears." These seemed prophetic words during the current era of educational restructuring.

The moments of tension and disequalibrium that occasionally gave rise to dilemmas within the Riverview School community were reminders of the complexity and unpredictability of the larger environment of which the school was a part. The tensions underlying the daily activities were positive in the ways that they fueled the human energy within the school, creating more and diversified possibilities for learning, achievement and success.

Measuring Success

My reasons for including Riverview School in this study were based on its reputation for success among students, staff, parents, and community members. Although two students and one staff member referred to the school's participation in the Canadian Education Association's *Exemplary School Project*, it became evident through our conversations that inclusion in this national study was an extraneous measure of success. Success seemed to be an intrinsic quality of Riverview School, defined and measured in ways which revolved around individual learning and achievement. In this highly diversified and inclusive environment, individuals had multiple opportunities to experience success.

Students, on average, performed consistently well on the grade 12 provincial government examinations. On the wall adjacent to the front entry were three framed Canada Scholarship Awards commemorating the academic accomplishments of former students. Although the school community recognized the success of individuals that had done well, achievement on standardized examinations did not become the focal point of instruction; teachers did not "teach to the test." Bob Wiebe explained how test results were regarded within the school:

> "In the school where I was before Riverview, we would go through the results of the tests. They were considered to be reflective of our teaching. Here, I have never had that feeling. The results come in, the principal gives them to the teachers and says, 'You're doing a great job.' Touch wood, there has been little deviation in the results in my area. If I were to judge my teaching on these results, I would ask myself, 'how can I do better?'"

This past year, the school district had conducted attitude surveys in response to the government's call for increased accountability. Parents, students, and support staff had participated. Perceptual data pointed to the widespread belief that Riverview School was providing an exceptional education for young people. People were happy and believed that their school was successful. The results were affirming, but attitude surveys, like government-administered examinations, were considered external measurements of success that told only part of the story.

"I'm on my way to my first high school credit at Riverview School, Mr. Brenneis." Carolyn beamed as she made this announcement. This student had, at her young age, already experienced considerable challenges in school and in life. That first high school credit would be a major turning point for her and the principal knew it. "That's terrific Carolyn," praised Mr. Brenneis. "You come and let me know when you get that credit. I want to know as soon as you complete it." Radiant in the afterglow of the supportive comments, Carolyn made her way back to class to continue working toward her goal. She had already experienced degrees of success since her arrival at the school a few months before. Carolyn had stopped running away from school and had started forming positive relationships with peers as well as teachers.

During the course of my stay at Riverview, I heard many positive comments about the Integrated Occupational Program, or the IO program as school members called it. It had been introduced several years before, and at this point had been accepted as being "just another program" within the school. When I inquired about the IO program, I was told that, "These were kids who had had problems learning in the regular stream in other schools. We knew that we could make a space for them here where they could be accepted and achieve." Greg Jordon was responsible for the administration of the Integrated Occupational Program. "I think our program has been a success," stated the vice principal rather modestly. His enthusiasm became apparent as he described the program:

> "It's been very good for the rest of the students in creating flexibility. People are of all kinds in the world, and I believe that we have to be able to adjust and accept everybody. This year with our overcrowding, some of the IOP classes have been held in the library where other students are doing research or studying. The IO students have the chance to see how students from the regular program use the library. The added benefit is that the IO students then have peers that can watch them achieve. It pushes them and those other students who see them.
>
> I think that the IO program has done a lot to shape attitudes and promote understanding of differences within the school. We've received some students that came here with definite social and family, as well as academic disadvantages. Once we can get these students past these disadvantages, we can see them grow. Very few of them drop out. We don't look at the IO program as a holding pen for students with disadvantages; here we look at it as a transitional program. A lot of these students will stay on and get a general diploma."

There had been years, I learned, when IO program students were on the academic teams that competed with other schools. There had also been instances when students within the IO program had had girlfriends and boyfriends in the regular academic stream. As Greg continued to enumerate the accomplishments of this group of students, I was aware that his view of the school's success had been influenced by his involvement in this innovative and inclusive program.

Students tended to define success first and foremost in terms of their own performance and achievement in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Although they felt some pressure to do their best, to "beat themselves," as Elizabeth had said, it seemed unacceptable to set goals of "winning" that might entail undermining the achievement and success of another. One parent alluded to what she believed was the measure of the school's success; "My kids are happy. There is always someone to help them solve their problems. The teachers are terrific and the peers are there for one another." Success was defined and measured in different ways using different criteria at Riverview School.

"The way you deal with challenges is to go after them." Roger Irvin encouraged all of his students and athletes to, "Set goals, and then once you've achieved those goals, set new goals." As a physical education teacher, he endeavored to create an environment supportive of individual achievement. Students reported that Mr. Irvin "nudged" all of his students forward toward success. When he coached in the extra-curricular sports program, Roger Irvin extended that learning to include a focus on competitive team building. "I tell my athletes that success starts here," Roger stated as he put his index finger to his forehead. The sports program provided a context for students to learn about their competitive nature. On the volleyball, basketball or badminton courts, at the curling rink, and at the golf courses, teams of students developed skills and set goals geared toward "winning." The extra-curricular sports program brought peers, staff, parents, and community members together in all seasons to watch and cheer on the school teams. Although the success of these events was judged by how well games were played, home crowds took particular delight when the Riverview teams "beat Evansdale," their long time rival high school from the neighboring community.

Celebrating Community

Beating Evansdale

The crowd that had come out for this evening's basketball match-up seemed even larger than normal. The Riverview Senior Boys had to win this game in order to hold onto first place in their league. The girls could improve their second place standing if they won. As the teams were getting ready to play, Mr. Brenneis moved through the bleachers, pouring coffee, chatting, and laughing with the parents and community members who had come out to watch. There was tremendous speculation about this evening's game. There was no shortage of amateur coaches and color analysts on the sidelines. Spectators from the two school communities knew each other. Indeed, some of them had played basketball with and against one another during their own high school days. The banter and friendly "back and forth" drew laughter from the crowd, and created a feeling of anticipation in the final minutes before the games started.

As the players from the two teams began to move around the court, the gymnasium suddenly came to life. The intermingling of the colors of the school uniforms mesmerized watching eyes that were attempting to see the pattern of play within this display of human energy. Inevitably, there were good and bad calls made by the referee. Where people sat in the gymnasium determined where they stood regarding their judgment of the coaching and the refereeing. A series of cheers countered the shaking of heads each time a basket was sunk, a pass was intercepted, or a foul was called. During the final quarter of this evening's game, the team that was behind called a time out. As the scoreboard clock mechanically counted down the seconds, apprehension among the fans intensified. In the final few electrifying moments, as always, there was one more chance to pull ahead, one more risk to be calculated, and one last challenge to be met before the game was over.

On this particular evening, the home crowd erupted with delight and jumped to its feet as Riverview's Senior Boys' Team conquered Evansdale. Those who were present knew that the outcome of this game would not seriously alter the friendly rivalry between the two schools, because there was always next time. Until the next encounter, however, Riverview School and their fans would revel in the telling and retelling of every detail of this glorious "win." This evening's victory brought people together and provided a sense of renewal, while propelling this community forward toward its next challenge.

CHAPTER 5

RIVERVIEW SCHOOL CASE STUDY COMPANION

This chapter includes interpretations of the leadership phenomenon which are based on themes that emerged from the analysis of the Riverview School case study report in Chapter 4. This analysis was conducted within the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. The development of the conceptual framework, as was previously stated, was influenced by Lambert et al.'s definition of leadership (1995, p. 29).

Embedded within the following interpretations are illustrations from the case study report on Riverview School as well as references to the research literature. These illustrations and references have been incorporated into the following in order to provide for reader interpretation.

This chapter has been organized under the headings: "The Context of Leadership;" "The Processes of Leadership;" "Tensions Underlying the Context and Processes of Leadership;" and "Interpretations of Leadership at Riverview." These headings correspond to the overarching themes which emerged from preliminary analysis of the two case study reports.

A summary of interpretations presented in this chapter is included in Chapter 8 in the section titled, "Leadership in Riverview School."

The Context of Leadership

The following discussion of the context of leadership in Riverview School is presented under the headings: "From a 'Rule-Based' to a 'Value-Based' School Environment;" "The Evolution of Organizational Roles;" "The Blend of Organizational and Individual Authority;" "Authentic Relationships with a Common Focus on Learning and Achievement;" and "A School Culture of Continuous Change."

From a 'Rule-Based' to a 'Value-Based' School Environment

Theories of change that are imported from the corporate world into education "are rules based. But life in schools is norm based," argued Sergiovanni (1996, p. xviii). When Al Brenneis arrived as the principal of Riverview School 11 years before, he was in the words of Sandra Delaney "much more rule-based." Sandra, a staff member who had been at the school when Al Brenneis was appointed principal, could see the changes in the school organization that had been initiated by him and that in her mind had given rise to the current school culture characterized by mutual respect among people:

> "There was a lot more disciplining in those earlier years. Once the pattern was established and everyone understood it, we moved away from the rules. We have an atmosphere of respect now. We don't need written rules anymore."

Over time, "a pattern had been set" that allowed staff and students to move away from bureaucratic structures and relinquish "established rules" in favor of a more relaxed and informal organization based on respect for the freedom and equality of the diverse individuals who comprised the school community. When I telephoned the principal, Al Brenneis, requesting permission to conduct my study in Riverview School, he had invited me to "Come out and have a look," but had alerted me to what I might perceive as a lack of structure and rules. "We're pretty informal around here," he had said. "We don't write things down. I don't know if there is much to see." In the case study report in the preceding chapter, several illustrations of the informal atmosphere were included. Most students, for example, did not put locks on lockers at Riverview and felt comfortable leaving personal belongings in the hallway. The library had pillows and bean bag chairs where students read and worked. The staff room door was left open and students were welcomed by staff into the room at all times. All 19 staff, student, and parent respondents when asked about the school rules indicated that there was really "only one rule" even though it was not written down; that rule was "respect."

The "pattern that had been set" had been influenced, in Al Brenneis' opinion, by his own experience as a classroom teacher who had been given the chance to be "his own boss." Based on his own experiences as a teacher where he had been allowed the independence to make decisions and take risks, Al Brenneis when he arrived at Riverview School had set the administrative and personal goal of creating a school environment where students and adults could also experience the freedom and support required to set personal goals for learning and growth; where students and adults could achieve their goals and feel successful:

> "I liked the feeling of being my own boss. I liked feeling free to make my own decisions and choices. That's how I learn the best. I thought if I was ever a school principal I would try and give students and staff the opportunity to have that same experience. You have to be prepared for people to make

> mistakes. That's how we learn. The only people who don't make mistakes are those who don't do anything."

All eight of the students whom I interviewed felt that they had "incredible freedom" and choices in their learning as long as they were respectful of others. All eight students who were interviewed indicated that in this environment of mutual respect, they had the "freedom" to set individual goals and attain them without feeling the pressure to "put on an act," or compete. One grade 12 student indicated, "Everyone respects each other. . . the only pressure you feel is the pressure to beat yourself." With no feeling of being "winners" and/or "losers," students claimed to enjoy a sense of equality. Several students commented that they were "encouraged to try," and to participate in a wide variety of activities. Kara, the vice president of the students' council, remarked that "no one dwelt on the bad," and that students were "praised for what they did well." Anthony, one of the grade 12 student respondents, explained that Riverview was different than other schools because the teachers understood that students did not "need to be controlled;" they just needed "encouragement." Respect, freedom, equality, praise and encouragement; some or all of these words were repeated by the eight student respondents when they answered questions about the school rules and structures. The teacher respondents shared similar perspectives.

William Fraser, a teacher new to the school, was able to compare his recent experiences to those he had had in other schools. His comments emphasized the respect, freedom, and encouraging support which he had encountered thus far at Riverview:

> "You don't feel pressured into doing things. You feel like you 'want' to do well, for the students and for yourself. I have never received a no or a negative. When you get that positive reaction, then what you want to do is make the best of what you've got. You want to be part of that positive energy."

Bob Wiebe's story of having previously worked with principal Al Brenneis as a teaching colleague, was a powerful illustration of the importance attributed to the values of mutual respect, diversity and freedom within Riverview School:

> "The standing joke between them according to Bob was, that during those ten years that they had taught together, they had "only ever agreed twice." Although both had different perspectives, their view of students was similar and it was evident that they had a great deal of respect for each other. 'Our

> differences have been a strength,' confirmed Bob. 'We value each other's diversity.'"

Several respondents believed that, over time, there had been an evolution from a "rule-based" to a "valued-based" school environment beginning with the arrival of Al Brenneis as principal 11 years before. Morgan (1997) explained the enormity of cultural change within organizations that move from bureaucratic to cultural ways of thinking and acting:

> In the most fundamental sense, culture has a holographic quality. Characteristics of the whole must be encoded in all the parts. Otherwise, the parts fail to express and act on the character of the whole. The best teams, and the free-flowing organizations that have discarded bureaucratic forms of management, constantly reflect this quality. They are organized through core meanings that people own and share. It is this quality that allows them to be flexible, adaptive and nonbureaucratic. Organizationally, shared meanings provide alternatives to control through external procedures and rules. (p. 143)

The respondents who were long time members of Riverview believed that over time the school had evolved from being formally organized along bureaucratic lines, to being more informally organized around the diverse human interactions and shared meanings shaped by cultural norms of mutual respect, equality, and freedom.

The Evolution of Organizational Roles

The changes in the culture of Riverview had caused changes in the way people within the school viewed the formal organizational roles. Although the roles of principals, teachers, support staff, and students were still clearly defined at Riverview, the distinctions between and among these roles were often blurred. In a school environment built on mutual respect, equality and freedom, the differences between and among individuals within the staff and student groups tended to be minimized.

The hierarchy of age and grades that often sets students apart, for example, was less evident within the high school student population at Riverview. One female student quoted within the case report commented, "I really don't know what grade students in the high school were in;" age didn't seem to matter. This student and others contended that they were not necessarily "friends with everyone," but all students "got along." The scene in the gymnasium during my first day in the school provided a vivid illustration of the way in which all students, regardless of age or grade level, "got along." I described it in the case report in the following way:

> There were no arbitrary rules or artificial boundaries separating these young people. Almost intuitively, it seemed, the individuals and groups using the gym that lunch hour recognized and showed respect for each other's space.

The back stairs near the rear door of the school and the town cafe were two more places where "students intermingled," and where there were no distinctions made based on age, grade level, or academic ability.

Likewise, within the staff room where teachers from the elementary, junior and senior high schools met for lunch, people intermingled. There were no designated chairs or noticeable divisions between staff members in this setting. Based on observations which I had recorded in my journal, in the case report I indicated that staff members came and went over the course of the lunch hour; "one person would vacate a chair at the large square table in the kitchen area, and another would take up occupancy without an interruption in the flow of conversation, teasing, and laughter." William Fraser, the newest teacher on staff, commented that he had apprehensions coming to Riverview after having heard of the school's reputation as "super school." He was relieved upon his arrival to find everyone welcoming in the "comfortable and laid back atmosphere of the school." No distinctions were made among staff members based on seniority or subject areas. No distinctions were made between the support staff and professional staff. Laura Tait, the library technician, for example, was considered to be "one of the teachers" by students and the other staff members.

The descriptions within the case report of the places where school members met and interacted, such as the gymnasium, the back steps, the cafe, the staff room and the library, all emphasized the importance attributed to informal roles and personal networks within Riverview. The images presented in the case report of these meeting places reflected a culturally-tight organization much like what Morgan (1997) described in the above citation using words such as "free-flowing," "adaptive," and "non-bureaucratic." The places where school members came together within Riverview were not controlled by "external rules or procedures" (p. 143).

Most of the eight student respondents had difficulty describing the relationships with their teachers, because each teacher was an individual whom they had in many cases come to know over their several years of attending Riverview School. When the eight student respondents were asked to describe their teachers, the words "guide," "counselor," and "coach" were repeated. Without designated counselors in the school, and given that most of the teachers also coached at least one school sport, it was understandable why these were the terms that students selected. All of the students who were interviewed felt that they could go "to any of their teachers" and they would receive the advice or help that they required. All eight of the student respondents felt that they were "treated like adults" within the school. Five of the eight student respondents claimed that their teachers were "more like equals" than authority figures. Craig, a grade 12 student, described the role of his teachers within the social hierarchy of the school; in his mind the teachers were "somewhere between parents and friends."

The principals were referred to as "teachers" by their students, and indeed Al Brenneis taught mathematics and Greg Jordan taught science within the high school. One parent who had had Al Brenneis as a high school mathematics teacher several years before believed that he had changed, and that her daughter who was currently in Al Brenneis' grade 12 mathematics class "told him things we would never have told our teachers." In the case report, the grade 11 girl's description of her encounters with Al Brenneis and her trip to the office illustrated the principal's shift away from the traditional authoritarian role of high school principal. "He's a good person to talk to because he acts like a friend and not a principal, " she commented. "He accepted our point of view as being equal to that of the teacher's," she reported when talking about a discipline episode. The description of my tour of the school with the principal that first day provided an illustration of the relaxed and purposeful interactions among principal, staff, and students:

> Mr. Brenneis seemed accustomed to receiving visitors, and adept at incorporating the duties of host with those of school principal. When people approached us, he made a quick introduction, and then excused himself while he turned his attention to the student or staff member who needed help solving a problem, or who had news to share.

Lambert and her colleagues commented on the impact on the overall school organization when a shift away from paternalistic relationships occurred:

> Relationships that are dominated by one role or another are deeply unsatisfying. Over time they result in paternalistic relationships that establish dependencies and resentment. Authentic relationships involve the realignment of power so that participants can emerge into leadership roles whereby they share more or less equally in guiding one another toward new meanings. (Lambert et al., 1996, p. 22)

Over the 11 years that Al Brenneis had been principal of Riverview School, a blending of the formal and informal aspects of designated school roles had occurred, and differences based on position within the formal social hierarchy of the school were most often undetectable.

The Blend of Organizational and Individual Authority

Heifetz (1994) referred to authority within organizations as "conferred power to perform a service" (p. 57). In this definition, Heifetz seemed to be implying that organizational authority was derived and maintained through the formal "relationships and mutual agreements" within the organization (p. 57). Rost (1991) claimed that in theory and in practice, leadership has often been misinterpreted and reduced to a description of "good management" (p. 180). Rost and others have argued for a more holistic view of leadership. Ogawa and Bossert (1995), for example, claimed that leadership is a quality that is dispersed throughout the organization and as such transcends hierarchical managerial roles within the social structure. Sergiovanni (1996) argued for the abandonment of the assumption that one's bureaucratic role in the school determines one's functions. "Functions," he claimed, "could just as well follow patterns of expertise as patterns of hierarchy" (p. 8).

The 19 staff, student, and parent respondents from Riverview School were respectful and in some cases admiring of the organizational authority, leadership, and "good management" of principal Al Brenneis and vice principal Greg Jordan. Respondents believed that most of the decisions concerning the efficient running of the school were made by Al Brenneis and Greg Jordan. Interestingly, the 19 respondents whom I interviewed did not feel that decisions made in managing the school impinged on their freedom to make decisions concerning their own "work" of teaching and learning. They claimed to have a great deal of autonomy and responsibility in setting personal goals around teaching and learning. All staff and students who were interviewed felt encouraged to be innovative and take risks. Quoting Capra and Steindel-Rast (1991), Lambert et al. argued the case for using organizational authority to promote individual authority which supported a growth in the sense of autonomy and empowerment:

> Those in authority should use their power to empower those under their authority, to make them stand on their own two feet. To empower someone means giving them authority; and to give someone authority means giving them responsibility. (cited in Lambert et al., 1996, p. 126).

As staff and students of Riverview had became more skilled at "being their own bosses" and assuming individual authority over their own goal-setting, learning and achievement, Al Brenneis believed that his role as principal had changed. He commented on the changes when he stated that he felt comfortable managing the school of 330 while spending one half of his day teaching. The principal's office, so often a symbol of organizational authority within a school, was empty most of the time and jokingly referred to by Al Brenneis as the "storage room." Al believed that as members of the school assumed individual authority and set and went about attaining their goals, the management of the school had become easier. He commented on what he perceived to be the transition from conferred to shared authority that had occurred over time as staff and students developed greater skills at directing and managing their own goal setting and achievement. On numerous occasions, Al Brenneis remarked that he could leave the school building and "everything would go on as if he were there;" that over the years things had changed and that there "really wasn't much" for him "to do around here anymore." The only "official duties" expected of the two principals at Riverview, were that of disciplinarian and intermediary between teachers and parents. Al Brenneis still handled the discipline of the high school students and all concerns expressed by parents. "If the students and parents have to be angry at someone," Al Brenneis stated," I want them to stay friends with their teachers and be angry with me." As designated school leader, he assumed and was conferred this authority in what he and others claimed was in the interest of preserving the positive relationships between students and teachers.

With the transition from a rule-based to a value-based organization of school and with the shift away from hierarchical social roles, a progressive growth in autonomy and responsibility among school members had occurred. With these changes, the authentic relationships between and among the adolescents and adults of Riverview had also evolved.

Authentic Relationships with a Common Focus On Learning, Achievement and Success

In the first section of the case study report on Riverview School, titled "School As Community," I wrote about the centrality of the cohesive and trusting relationships among people within the school. Over the months that I spent studying the school, it became clear that the relationships between and among adults and adolescents provided the context in which the organizational activities occurred and were understood. Lambert et al. (1996) emphasized the importance of trusting relationships within community in "evoking potential:"

> All members of schools need community to maintain resiliency and sustain life. This belief is supported through multiple research studies now available that link student learning achievement, engagement in school and with community, and prosocial development to meaningful and supportive relationships and to membership in community (Battistich et al., & Schaps, 1995; Comer, 1980; Fraser, 1991; Lipsitz, 1984; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1991). (p. 43)

Lambert et al. also made the case for the promotion of "authentic" relationships, which in their words, allowed for the development of common purpose within schools. Authentic relationships, as described by Lambert and her colleagues, were multi-dimensional and included: holding a long-term investment and concern for the growth and development of colleagues, students, and parents; learning from each other in reciprocal relationships; providing sustained support for other members of the community; insisting on the growth of each other by holding and exercising high expectations; seeking truths together; creating collective memories together and respecting but not becoming "stuck" in these shared experiences; understanding the need for multiple patterns of relationships; and seeking meaning together so that relationships and communities make sense (pp. 28-29).

In the opening pages of the report on Riverview School, I wrote about my observations of the importance attributed to "evoking the potential" of each student:

> Learning and achievement were the primary focus at Riverview, and were shaped by the belief that students came to school with their own unique gifts and talents. The inclusive and innovative programming, as a result, continuously evolved in rhythm with the changes in student population and provincial curricula.

Learning and achievement were the central focus of individuals who felt that they belonged to a responsive school community. Through my interviewing and observations of the members of Riverview, the central belief that each student had "unique gifts and talents" became clear. In the opinion of the 19 interviewees, the trusting and authentic relationships within their community environment were primordial to sustaining the common focus on learning and achievement at Riverview School.

A School Culture of Continuous Change

In being responsive and supportive of the development of the "unique gifts and talents" of students, the teachers and principals planned for inclusive and innovative programming. People setting individual goals and striving to "beat themselves," as one student had stated, seemed to contribute to the state of continuous change within the school. Change had become part of the daily routine of the school that "continuously evolved in rhythm with the changes in student population and provincial curricula."

Three of the long-time staff members who participated in the interviews pinpointed two specific events as being the catalysts for the evolution in the school culture which, in their words, had occurred "over time." The first event was the arrival of Al Brenneis as principal. Al Brenneis' view of school organization had, in the minds of these three staff members, precipitated the evolution from a "rule-based" to a "value-based" school community. Formal and informal roles and lines of authority were no longer strictly hierarchical. The other catalytic incident cited by respondents was the external school evaluation which had been conducted by the department of education nine years before. Through the process of the school evaluation, staff members had become aware of the need to change the way the school program was being organized and delivered in order to prevent a further decline in student enrollments, and in order to avert a school closure. Four staff members believed that they had become more innovative in their approaches to timetabling and programming because of the evaluation. Over the years since the evaluation, innovation in programming going on within the school environment in response to evolving needs had become the norm and, in the words of the librarian, Mrs. Tait, was "energizing."

Mr. Wiebe, a teacher who had come from a neighboring high school five years before, stressed through the following use of metaphor the "naturalness" of change that was continually occurring throughout the school:

> "I was used to this other system where the system exists and the people have to find ways to fit in. Here at Riverview it is more like an amoeba that floats around and continually changes depending on whatever the need seems to be."

This description of the differences between the two school systems experienced by Bob Wiebe is reminiscent of the differences between Morgan's (1997) machine and organismic metaphors for organization. It is also reminiscent of Capra's (1996) analysis of what he referred to as the "mechanistic" and "ecological" paradigms. The ecological paradigm described by Capra assumed a holistic worldview, seeing the world as an "integrated whole rather than a dissociated collection of parts" as is the case in the prevalent mechanistic view (p. 6). According to Capra, educational organizations, which he described as human communities, can best be understood from an ecological viewpoint, where "health" is determined by diversity, flexibility and co-evolution (p. 227).

Wheatley (1992) and others have written extensively on the self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-renewing capacities of ecological systems. Common to all of these organismic and ecological views is the fundamental importance of the network of interdependent relationships within these living systems. These relationships "form a dense network of connections thereby increasing the complexity of the system and increasing the capacity for self-organization. . . . Because people are connected to one another, differences become a strength and not a weakness" (Lambert et al., 1996, p. 46). Don McLeod was the staff member who told me that in order to understand the school culture, I would have to talk to a lot of people. He insisted that all staff members had different but important knowledge about the school. He made the statement that "each staff member brought a different perspective," and that each was equally valuable. Bob Wiebe said that he believed that the "diversity" among staff members was a strength.

The long time school members believed that, over time, the school culture of continuous change had developed at Riverview, and had led to the relaxed atmosphere where "things weren't written down." Fullan (1991) argued that changing school structures is less the means by which school cultures change, and more the result of changes in the school culture. It was within this flexible and diverse community that the context and processes of leadership co-evolved at Riverview.

The Processes of Leadership

Blase and Blase (1997), in considering the impact of increased individual authority and autonomy within the successful schools that they had studied, commented that "empowerment enables participants to assume responsibility for their own growth and for decisions about their work and practice" (p. 4). At Riverview, where authentic relationships and shared authority were valued as much as individual autonomy, school members were participants who took part in the social processes which contributed to and sustained the constantly changing "reality" of the school community. Morgan (1997) in describing organization as the cultural enactment of a shared reality stated that:

> In recognizing that we accomplish or enact the reality of our everyday world, we have a powerful way of thinking about culture. It means that we must attempt to understand culture as an ongoing, proactive process of reality construction. This brings the whole phenomenon of culture alive. When understood in this way, culture can no longer just be viewed as a simple variable that societies or organizations possess or something that a leader brings to his or her organization. Rather, it must be understood as an active, living phenomenon through which people jointly create and recreate the worlds in which they live. (p. 141)

Lambert et al. (1996) defined the processes that "give life" to the ongoing reality construction within schools in the following way:

> Leadership is not a person or a role. It is the processes that make up the relationships among us. Leadership is the participatory learning opportunities that exist among us in a school culture. (p. 21)

The following discussion of the processes of leadership at Riverview School is based on several key aspects of the inter-relationship of the perspectives of the 19 respondents. According to several adult respondents, the leadership processes at Riverview had co-evolved within the organizational context described in the preceding section. The following discussion of the evolution of the leadership processes at Riverview is organized under the headings: "From Influence to Reciprocity;" "The Reciprocal Processes;" and "The Participatory Learning Opportunities."

From Influence to Reciprocity

Leadership is often defined as the ability to influence others (Rost, 1991), and brings to mind images from leadership styles theories which were discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. This traditional image of leadership is hierarchical and suggests paternalistic relationships. It is, however, a view of school leadership that is still prevalent. Lambert et al. (1996) commented on the nature and reasons that have given rise to the continued acceptance and promotion of this autocratic style of leadership based upon influence, authority, and social position within the organization:

> The industrial model required a kind of leadership that involved authority over, not collaboration with. Those at the top of the hierarchy assumed patriarchal or matriarchal roles that created parent-child relationships among

> professional adults working in the same school community. Such relationships are characterized by permission asking and granting; punitive responses for slight transgressions; one way evaluation, communication and feedback; and praise or other extrinsic rewards. The results are predictable and are considered desirable by some members of the patriarchy or matriarchy: Teachers in this setting do not grow up; they do not progress through stages of adult development or become reflective practitioners. (p. 4)

When Al Brenneis arrived at Riverview, the student population was dwindling, it was believed, because of increased competition from the large high school in the nearby town. Several staff members remembered the feelings of demoralization brought on by the prospect of a possible school closure. Al Brenneis was convinced that by bringing about changes in the school culture which in his mind had become "stuck" on the negative aspects inherent in the school environment, a "moving" culture where people were focused on problem-solving could be created. In her extensive study of school change, Rosenholtz (1989) found that the degree to which teachers were collegial and sharing depended on to what extent the staff culture was "stuck" or "moving." She found significant

> differences in staff cultures, characterizing them as 'moving' or 'stuck.' In staff cultures operating with norms of collegiality and in 'moving' (as opposed to 'stuck') cultures, teachers value learning together. (p. 71)

Lambert et al. (1996) also claimed that:

> At the core of the school change agenda is staff culture, which is composed of the norms, beliefs, and values that constitute the way things are done in a particular school setting. . . . Among the elements that make up staff culture are beliefs about one another, the way the staff works together (or doesn't), students, the community, and the fundamental purpose of the school. (p. 51)

In order to promote a staff culture that was "moving" and oriented toward problem solving, and where "learning together" was valued, Al Brenneis recognized that a shift had to occur from the hierarchical system based on paternalistic relationships which he encountered upon his arrival at Riverview, to a system of shared authority and collaborative leadership. What had to be established first, he believed, were the conditions in which the organizational processes could evolve. In other words, a context for leadership had to be created. The changes in the school environment that had occurred over time are described in the preceding section; the processes underlying and supporting those changes are outlined below.

Sergiovanni (1996) put forth the contention that leadership within schools should be practiced as pedagogy, where "principals, for example, exercise their stewardship responsibilities by committing themselves to building, serving, caring for, and protecting the school and its purpose" (p. xvi). Lambert et al. (1996) claimed that "to lead is to attend to the learning of those around us as well as to the culture of the whole organization" (p. 12). In attending to the learning of the staff, and with the goal of facilitating changes in the school culture, Al Brenneis used his influence as well as his authority as school principal. When he arrived as principal of Riverview, he elected to bring two staff members with him who had the reputation of becoming actively involved with students and positively influencing those around them. His intention was to create "movement" in the staff culture. According to Al Brenneis and others, each of the two teachers along with the principal had upon their arrival assumed several curricular and extra-curricular roles within the kindergarten to grade 12 school. The new staff members, by their presence and their actions, had exercised influence and caused "movement" toward proactive thinking about change. The presence of new staff members focused on developing collegial relationships through their involvement had in the mind of one long time staff member "energized" the staff as they confronted the demoralizing threat of a school closure. When Sandra Delaney commented on the current state of the staff culture, she said:

> "We are energy people around here. . . As teachers, we feed off of one another. It spills over to the kids. Because we are in a smaller school we know that we all have to get along, that we have to accept one another for a long time. We look at problems in that context. There is always a way to get around problems and make things work."

Sandra's description of "feeding off of one another," and "getting around problems to make things work," suggests a state of reciprocity, as does Bob Wiebe's comments in the case report that, "We all want what is best for the school, whether it is for us individually or us as a collective unit." Reciprocity suggests influence "with" and not "over" others in framing and solving problems and in bringing about change. Reciprocity also suggests an environment of equality, freedom, respect, and trust between and among school members. These were values observed and reported in the case study of Riverview School. Lambert et al. contended that reciprocal processes can only take place within the context of relationships where there is mutual respect and trust:

> It is important to understand that the capacity for reciprocity is the result of long years of meaning-making with others (Kegan, 1982). To be able to move outside oneself, to differentiate one's perceptions from those of another, to practice empathy, to move out of the self and observe the responses and thoughts of another--all are prerequisites to reciprocity. . . . The reciprocal processes that enable us to construct meaning occur within the context of relationships. The creation and expansion of our possibilities and capacities for reciprocity occur in communities rich in relationships. (Lambert et. al., 1995, p. 34)

The arrival of Al Brenneis and the conduct of the school evaluation were key incidents cited as catalysts in the above description of the evolutionary changes in the context of leadership. These two incidents were cited by four adult respondents as key to the establishment of the current "capacities for reciprocity" within the Riverview. They were, in the minds of these long-time members, critical events that had given rise to the current way that staff members and students viewed and participated in the reciprocal processes underlying the school culture of continuous change.

The Reciprocal Processes

The "unstuck," collegial staff culture characterized by inquiry, problem solving, and "learning together" was observed and described at several points in the case study report on Riverview School. Through the conversations, storytelling, teasing, and laughter, staff members supported one another in experiencing, understanding and learning. As a newcomer to the school, I had been struck by the "movement" within the staff relationships, and the collegial interactions which I observed among staff members within the staff room. There were no formal or informal claims on territory or space. For example, people "sat where they liked" and no staff member laid claim to a specific chair or place at the table.

William Fraser, the newest member of the Riverview staff, had also commented on the collegiality and willingness on the part of other staff members to become involved and supportive of his curricular initiatives:

> "Everyone is helpful. I've never heard anyone complain about being over-worked. I feel confident to go and ask for help if I need it, and I enjoy helping out where I can." He and one other teacher were working on the social studies 10 program together. William pointed out what he believed was the strength of this kind of collegial sharing. "We can arrive at the same conclusion by way of our individual paths. Working together gives us ideas."

He claimed that being part of the staff made him want to be part of the "positive energy" which he sensed all around him.

The three respondents who were staff members of long-standing believed that over time students as well as teachers had become participants in the reciprocal processes that were constantly occurring throughout the school. The coach, Roger Irvin, made the point that students on the sports team "found ways to complete their homework" and play sports. They worked it out with their teachers. He believed that all of the teachers engaged with students in framing and solving problems, and in this way promoted individual learning, achievement, and success.

One of the grade 10 students new to the school shared his perception of the essence of the teaching and learning process at Riverview. His description is reminiscent of the processes Lambert et al. (1996) and others have called constructivist learning:

> "Teachers never make you feel stupid," said David, a grade 10 student who was new to the school. His decision to come to Riverview had been influenced by the positive comments that he had heard about the teachers. "The teachers here will answer the same question over and over until you get it. They tell you to keep asking questions until you get it."

Anthony, a grade 12 student respondent, believed that the reason students at Riverview did well on government examinations was because, "teachers don't force you to learn. They really make you want to learn." The description of Anne Miller's English 33 class in the case study report was one example of how teachers engaged and encouraged all students to want to learn.

Over the months that I spent studying Riverview, I observed teachers and students involved in social interactions which supported inquiry, learning, and understanding inside and outside of the classroom. I also observed the principal as he became involved in similar exchanges with staff and students. During that first day when principal Al Brenneis led me on a tour through the school, for example, the conversations and interactions between the principal and the other school members followed a pattern that was repeated. In the case report I included the following observation which I had recorded in my journal after my first visit to Riverview School:

> The five or six conversations that had occurred during this official introduction to the school were all different, yet similar. They had all begun

> with someone asking a question, and had all ended with someone speaking words of praise or humor.

The incident recounted by the grade 11 female student is a poignant illustration of the authenticity of the relationship between a student and the principal. As this student reflected on the meaning of that discipline episode, she focused on the feelings of equity and respect that she had experienced:

> "Last year we got into trouble for misbehaving for a substitute teacher in phys ed. He came in and was yelling a bit as principals are supposed to do. Afterwards, when he had finished, he said to us, 'Now in all fairness, is there anything that you would like to yell at me about?' He gives you a chance to say what happened. He takes all perspectives. It made us all feel better that time because he listened to us. He accepted our point of view as being equal to that of the teacher's."

This student's account mirrored the sense of "due process" and "fair treatment" that was repeatedly observed and talked about when staff and students referred to their relationship and interactions with the principal.

Over the months that I spent studying Riverview, I observed students who were consistently supportive of each other in ways that were enabling. Friendships and extra-curricular activities were contexts in which inquiry and learning occurred:

> Lynda and Emily were two grade 11 girls who supported one another through their friendship. "We've been glued together since we arrived here over a year ago," said Lynda rather proudly. "If Emily is having a problem she'll talk to me, and if I'm having a problem I'll talk to Emily."

In Lambert et al.'s conception of leadership, all members of the educational organization are "participants":

> We use the word participants to communicate the idea of equity and shared responsibilities. The traditional and archaic terms leader and follower conjure up images of walking behind, being alert to the cue of the real leader, waiting one's turn. These are not images that are useful to shared leadership. Participantship implies that each person has opportunities to perform leadership behaviors that benefit the community as a whole.
> (1996, p. 21)

The "human energy" which was described at several points throughout the case report seemed to emanate from the conversations and interactions that I had observed between and among students and staff members. Through their interactions, students and staff were participants who supported one another in making sense of individual and collective experiences; they were, through their involvement in these "participatory learning opportunities," contributors to the continuous individual and collective construction of reality taking place within Riverview School.

Participatory Learning Opportunities

In Lambert et al.'s (1995) definition of leadership as the reciprocal processes that enable individuals to participate in the on-going construction of their organizational reality, the claim is that "the community is considered the medium for meaning making, for human growth and development" (p. 39). Suggested in this definition is the notion of the school as a learning community. This is a notion about which a great deal has been written in recent years, and which was discussed in the review of the literature in Chapter 2 (Barth, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1994a). Morgan (1997), in inviting readers to view the organization as "brain-like," made the following claims as he presented his conception of the learning organization:

> They would be organizations that have wonderful memories that are organized and accessed in a highly decentralized way. They would be capable of processing massive amounts of information and of shaping it for different purposes. They would be comfortable with managing different points of view. They would be organizations where individuals, teams, and other units are able to take on almost any challenge and find ways of organizing for the needs at hand. They would be capable of functioning when major sections become obliterated or immobilized. They would be organizations where capacities, intelligence, and control are distributed in a way that allows any single element to become a vital part of the whole. They would be organizations that are able to grow, develop, and change their personalities along with changing experiences. They would, in short, be intelligent, self-organizing brains that reflect all the qualities of what we have described as a 'learning organization.' (p. 101)

Implicit in Lambert et al.'s definition and Morgan's description is the belief that the individual and the collective co-evolve. Also implied is that the individuals within the organization, through their participation, growth, and development, contribute to the constantly evolving shape of the collective identity. "Although adults bring more history, more experiences, and more reasoned beliefs to the learning experience, the processes of learning still entail the collective and individual construction of meaning and knowledge," claimed Lambert et al. (1995, p. 39).

In Riverview School where "things were informal," and "not written down," adults like students created "shared histories, cultures, and purposes through their interactions" (p. 18). The conversations focused on negotiating perceptions and meaning went on continually between and among students and adults; this manner of communication was part of the daily routine. In the opening vignette in the case report, the image of the "storytelling flowing from the hallways into the classrooms, library and staff room" reinforced the impression that this type of communication was natural, routine, on-going, and energizing for participants and observers. The nine staff members, eight students, and two parents whom I interviewed, however, believed that it was through participation in school activities such as "the bonding walk," and sporting events such as the basketball game depicted in the closing vignette of Riverview School, that the authentic connections between people were redefined and reaffirmed. Individual accounts indicated that people derived a sense of renewal, common purpose, and community from these school activities.

The opening vignette, titled "The Bonding Walk," provided an introduction to the case report on Riverview School and an illustration of the nature of the relationships among the members of the high school community. This annual walkathon, sponsored by the newly elected student council of the high school, involved staff and all of the high school students. In the case report, it was stated that this event was "kept simple" so that "people could spend time together, walking, talking, and getting to know one another." By taking time to participate in extra-curricular activities where the norms of equality, respect, and trust were surfaced and practiced outside the school, these students and teachers were enacting their commitment to the collective. Focused on relationships, the three hours outside of the daily routine of school provided time and space to negotiate and affirm commonality among school members without concerns for organizational roles and rules. In the words of the librarian, activities like the bonding walk "leveled the playing field." The value placed on participation in the construction of meaning and understanding of community activities was emphasized in the case report through the description of the storytelling that occurred around this event:

> Over the course of the afternoon, the stories from the morning's journey were told and retold in classrooms, in hallways, in the staff room, and in the library. Through the telling and the retelling, it was clear to me why the students fondly referred to this annual event as "the bonding walk."

The description of the basketball game in the closing vignette also illustrated the commitment to collective participation in school activities. The difference, however, was in the competitive nature of the event. By concentrating competitive energy on defeating the rival team from another school, the Riverview spectators and players were in a sense involved in the collective processes of self-referencing and self-renewal; the on-going co-creation of "the sense of identity of the organization" (Lambert et al., 1996, p. 44). The winning and losing were not as significant, I wrote, as the conversations and storytelling that would be stimulated by the discussion of the details of the sporting event:

> Until the next encounter, however, Riverview School and its fans would revel in the telling and retelling of every detail of this glorious "win." This evening's victory brought people together and provided a sense of renewal, while propelling this community forward toward its next challenge.

During these collective activities, negotiating perspectives and affirming commonality were central. These events which brought the adult and student population together allowed individuals within the school community to engage in processes which led to the establishment of communal understanding and common purposes. Lambert et al. (1996) claimed that "in schools, co-creation of the collective identity is a continuous process" (p. 44). Further to that, the contention was made that co-creation is a process that is critical to supporting the development of authentic relationships which form the context for leadership within schools that are learning communities:

> A school must build into its daily routines opportunities for conversation in which participants surface assumptions, beliefs, memories, and perceptions. These conversations lead to exploration and inquiry. . . . A learning community involves a continual wave of conversation characterized by exploration, inquiry, construction of meaning, and action. Embedded in these processes is the development of relationships that grow in density. (p. 66).

Over the months that I spent studying Riverview School, I observed the continuous participation of adults and students in purposeful conversation and storytelling; I observed the development of relationships that grew "in density." Through participation in the school activities such as the bonding walk and the sporting events, I watched as the members of the school collectively created a sense of community that was "larger than the sum of its parts" (Lambert et al., 1995, p. 38). Morgan (1997) argued that a "brain like" holographic quality develops within organizations when "qualities of the whole are enfolded in all the parts." The system, he contended, "has the ability to self-organize and regenerate itself on a continuous basis," in holographic and synergistic fashion (p. 100). Lambert et al. (1995) contended that "synergy in schools is the interaction dynamic arising from opportunities for joint conversations, work, and action" (p. 38).

At Riverview School, the energy that emanated from the adults and students "participating in learning opportunities" such as the bonding walk and sporting events was, in a sense, synergy, "energy with others" (Lambert et al., 1996, p. 42).

Tensions Underlying the Context and Processes of Leadership

Tensions underpinning the leadership context and processes at Riverview were two-fold in nature and were described in Chapter 4 under the heading, "Tensions Within Community." The first set of tensions were characteristic of what Lambert et al. (1995) called the duality of human nature; when individuals simultaneously experience the need to be free to make choices and the need to belong to community. "The challenge," the authors claimed, "rests in the dual nature of human beings to be both independent and interdependent, self-directed, and interconnected" (p. 43). The other set of tensions, illustrated by the references to government mandated changes being introduced into Riverview School, existed between the bureaucratic and cultural aspects of organization of the school, what Sergiovanni (1996) referred to as the *Gesellschaft* and the *Gemeinschaft* of organization.

Duality of Human Nature

In addressing the social and political tensions that arise from the duality of human nature, Sergiovanni (1996) argued for a "politics of virtue" as opposed to a "politics of division" in maintaining unity within collectivities while respecting the diversity of individuals. Quoting Elshtain (1995), Sergiovanni (1996) contended that Elshtain's perspective was founded upon the American democratic legacy:

> The American Founders had in mind the creation of a covenantal polity within which "The body is one but has many members. There can be unity with diversity. . . . The great challenge was to create a political body that brought people together and created a *we* but still enabled people to separate themselves and recognize and respect one another's individualities. This remains the great challenge for all modern democrats." (p. 176)

Recognizing and respecting one another's individualities was a challenge that occasionally occurred within the community of Riverview. In the section of the case report titled, "Tensions Within Community," I made reference to the newcomers at Riverview School. David, for example, the grade 10 student who had just arrived from another school, claimed to initially feel "disconnected" at Riverview. For him, the strong relationships between the staff and other students who had known each other for several years made him feel isolated and like an outsider. One staff member, when explaining the process by which newcomers were enculturated into the Riverview community stated, "The other kids let them know what's going on. By Christmas, you can no longer tell who the newcomers are." The enculturation of newcomers was not a one way process, however. One grade 12 student who had been at Riverview since her kindergarten year commented on the growth that had occurred within the community with the arrival of newcomers:

> "There have been newcomers, but it always takes awhile for us to get to know them. It always starts that way. Having newcomers has helped us all grow up a bit. We've learned a lot from them."

Although there were several school activities such as the bonding walk and the sporting events, not all students felt like they belonged within the school. In the case report, I quoted one grade 12 student who believed that even though all students got along, some students remained "outsiders."

In her landmark study, *The Good High School*, Lightfoot (1983) made the observation that:

> Empowerment reflects a dynamic process, not a static final state. One expects an ethos of self-criticism, dialogue, and even discomfort as the members of the community try to negotiate relationships that will allow initiative, autonomy, and responsibility for all. One expects a riveting tension between individual will and choice, on the one hand, and the requirements of community cohesion and commitment on the other.
> (pp. 9-10).

In the case report, I described two poignant instances of the "riveting tension" between individual will and the requirements of community. The two incidents of student expulsion described under the sub-heading "Withdrawal" illustrated instances where individuals were removed from the school because of their inability to meet the "requirements" of the community. Several of the long time staff members remembered two occasions when staff members had transferred because of the tension between individual "will and choice," and the "requirements of community cohesion." Morgan (1997), using the cultural metaphor to describe organization, stated that "cohesive groups are those that arise around shared meanings, while fragmented groups tend to be those characterized by multiple realities" (p. 145). Over the six months that I spent studying Riverview, I was struck over and over again by the cohesiveness among the school members. Although individuals shared a diversity of perspectives on the school organization, the school population was not fragmented by the multiple views of "reality."

Tension Between the Bureaucratic and Cultural

In Sergiovanni's (1996) critique of the current wave of education reform fueled by theories of management and change imported from the corporate world, a world to which he referred as *Gesellschaft*, he challenged readers to view school leadership as a civic and communal responsibility rather than a bureaucratic hierarchical enterprise (p. 184). Government mandated changes such as the move to site-based management and the publication of student results on government examinations are examples within the case report of the *Gesellschaft* approach to change. The *Gesellschaft* approach to educational change is simple to describe and understand, argued Sergiovanni, but does not work well in schools that are "managerially loose and culturally tight" (p. 159). Don McLeod and two of the other staff respondents believed that publishing student results would be harmful to students and contribute to the growing competitive spirit among schools. Al Brenneis and Greg Jordan had concerns about site-based management and its potentially divisive impact on the school system as well as the school. On the other hand, the *Gemeinschaft* view of organization which Sergiovanni advocated for schools recognized the importance of a school culture built on relationships and human purposes (p. 184). The perspectives of all 19 respondents were resonant with the *Gemeinschaft* view of organization. The context of leadership at Riverview School that was described in the preceding sections represented a *Gemeinschaft* view of organization where leadership was "one important part of the web of moral obligations that administrators, teachers, parents, and even students must accept if they are to embody civic virtue" (p. 184).

These two sets of tensions which were highlighted in the case were reported as "reminders of the complexity and unpredictability of the larger environment of which the school was a part." In the current social and political environment where the rights and freedoms of individuals often supersede those of the community, and where "efficiency" models of management focused on the bottom line have turned human enterprises such as schooling into corporate endeavors, leadership as experienced at Riverview School challenged dominant notions of school leadership.

Interpretations of Leadership At Riverview School

"The theories of leadership that we now have do not work very well in schools," stated Sergiovanni (1996, p. xix). Sergiovanni argued for the development of alternative theories of school leadership that were not necessarily all encompassing, but that encouraged "us to think differently" (p. xix). By conceptualizing schools as communities where members were engaged in the continuous construction of shared meanings, he argued, we created a new reality of school organization that allowed for different decision making. When schools are viewed as organizations focused on individual and collective learning, a theory of leadership

> for the schoolhouse should encourage principals, teachers, parents, and students to be self-managing, to accept responsibility for what they do, and to feel a sense of obligation and commitment to do the right thing. (p. xv)

Over time, with the changes in the school culture at Riverview School, it was perceived that there had been an increase in the capacity of individuals to be self-managing, to accept responsibility, and to feel a sense of obligation and commitment to do the "right thing." With the evolution from a rule-based to a value-based school organization, and with the move from hierarchical roles to a complex network of authentic relationships, the Riverview school members had over time become participants in the on-going construction of shared meaning. This reciprocal interaction among school members supported the continuous development of diversity within community.

Critical factors underpinning and contributing to the co-evolution of the context and processes of leadership were: the small size of Riverview high school; the stability of the student population within the rural community served by Riverview School; the consistency provided by the same principal leadership over a period of 11 years; the high degree of professionalism of the staff; and the commitment to learning among all school members.

The Small Size of Riverview High School

Boyer (1995), Sergiovanni (1995b) and others (Barker & Gump, 1964; Goodlad, 1984; Gregory & Smith, 1987; Heath, 1994; Lee & Smith, 1997; Raywid, 1998) have argued the case for small schools. Based on data collected for a major study on the impact of school size, Goodlad (1984) concluded that the smallest schools involved in his study were better at problem solving, were more intellectually oriented, and had greater student and parent satisfaction. "A good school," contended

Boyer (1995), "should be small enough for everyone to know one another by name" (p. 35).

Being known and knowing others contributed to the overall feeling of belonging that was mentioned by all eight of the student respondents, both of the parent respondents, and several of the staff members at Riverview. All of the student respondents attributed importance to knowing one another. Although none of the eight student interviewees claimed that everyone within the high school "was friends," all felt respected and supported. Leanne, a grade 10 student who had been elected to the student council executive, believed that age and grade differences among the students did not matter at Riverview; she felt that everyone got along and helped one another. All of the teachers made a similar claim. Al Brenneis' comment at the completion of the "bonding walk" activity, in which almost all of the 115 high school students had participated, was that the high school had come together; the grade 10s felt like part of the high school; there were "no more borders." The two parent respondents perceived the small size and familiarity among students to be critical to the success of the students. Arlene Smith stated that peer support was one of the strengths of the school, and that it "wasn't like that in other schools." Several of the staff members who were interviewed believed that the small size of the school contributed to the feeling of "family" between and among adults and students. Sandra Delaney claimed that staff and students found ways to get along because the school was small and people knew they would be together for a long time.

With no designated guidance counselors within the school, the Riverview students looked to the principals, teachers, support staff and each other for support. "There is always someone there to listen," stated Elizabeth of her peers and the staff. "I can go to any of my teachers for help," claimed Leanne. "There is always someone there to help them solve their problems," stated one of the parent respondents. According to Kleinfield, one of the advantages of small schools is that they create "undermanned settings" where there are not enough people to fit all the available designated leadership roles. More is asked of everyone, Kleinfield contended, and students as well as adults feel needed and are needed to make the school work (cited in Sergiovanni, 1995b, p. 52). Barker and Gump (1964) in their extensive study found that students in smaller schools were more eager to learn and were more likely to participate in school activities because of their understanding and involvement in the school community. At Riverview, where rules and procedures were not written down, students and adults were obligated and committed to communicating their understandings and beliefs within a respectful environment. According to the eight student respondents and several of the staff respondents, "everyone knows everything about everything." Furthermore, it was claimed by three of the eight student respondents that there was a sense of acceptance, freedom and empowerment in the realization that there were "no secrets" within this small school community.

Stability of Student Population

Lee, Smerdon, McMahon and Curtis (1997), from their study of six small high school sites in the mid-western United States, found that, "the community context in which the schools function has a large influence on how these small schools function" (p. 7). It is worth noting that the majority of 115 high school students had spent most of their school years at Riverview, a kindergarten through grade 12 school. The majority had also spent their entire lives in the rural community in which the school was situated. The seven respondents who were long time members of the student body believed that the sense of belonging which they experienced had developed over the several years that they had spent with a fairly stable peer group and set of teachers. These students remembered significant events that had occurred in previous grades such as the arrival of newcomers to the school. Elizabeth, a student who had been at Riverview since her kindergarten year, recounted that her grade 12 peer group had not always been accepting of newcomers. In retrospect , however, she believed that the arrival of outsiders had helped the long time students "to grow." The students were confident in their familiarity with several of the teachers as "people." There were teachers at Riverview who had taught parents and aunts and uncles of student respondents at some earlier point in time. Students who were interviewed seemed aware of the complexities underlying the relationships which extended beyond the present time and the immediate school community. Students took pride in sharing their knowledge of people's accomplishments as well as their understanding of tragedies that had befallen the community. This sense of history, collective memory, and extended community seemed to contribute to the feelings of security and the continuity of learning and schooling to which all student respondents and several staff respondents referred. Robert Bellah (1985) defined "real communities as communities of memory which are constituted by their past" (p. 153).

The parent respondents were also connected to the school community in more ways than through their children. One of the parents to whom I spoke, for example, had Mr. Brenneis as a mathematics teacher when she had been in high school. She made the claim that he "had changed." She believed that her daughter and other students told the principal "things that we would never have told our teachers." According to this parent, over time, the network of relationships between and among the adults and students had become more relaxed, but more complex and intertwined. The closing vignette of the case report, "Beating Evansdale," emphasized the extended nature of the network of relationships within this rural community. "Spectators from the two school communities knew each other," it was stated. "Indeed some of them had played basketball with and against one another during their high school days." The "friendly rivalry" was on-going and the winning and losing was not as important as the interaction between and among people of all ages from this rural community. The eight students, nine staff members, and two parents whom I interviewed over the time spent studying Riverview School, all valued being a part of this school community where diversity, growth, and achievement were encouraged through the respectful and supportive relationships that had developed over time within a community that extended beyond the school walls. Lambert et al. (1996) made the claim:

> A sense of collective identity keeps members connected with their central purpose. A strong sense of community with supportive and caring relationships among members can provide a sense of security--rather than resistance--in a changing environment. (p. 46)

Although all respondents talked about the sense of security which they experienced, they were also aware of the tensions which could arise from such familiarity. One of the student respondents who had experienced difficulties within the community and the school spoke of the importance he attributed to "clearing his name." In his mind, the community from which he felt alienated at the time of his initial interview with me, included the small towns and families living within a 40 kilometer radius of the school. In their extensive review of the schools as community literature, Shields and Seltzer cited Noddings (1995) who wrote of the dark side of community, where those who do not conform to shared norms, beliefs, values, and traditions feel encouraged to "find their sense of community elsewhere" (Shields & Seltzer, 1997, p. 414). In the opinion of this student, community members' attitudes were "slow to change," and were occasionally "inflexible" when traditional values were challenged.

Principal Leadership

In their study of seven exemplary principals of schools affiliated with the American League of Professional Schools, Blase and Blase (1997) found that these principals considered themselves "one among equals" within their staffs. Blase and Blase (1997) described the principals from the exemplary shared governance schools included in their study as men and women who believed in promoting personal authority. These principals, the authors claimed, had

> the courage and skill to work with others as equals, to be one among equals, and to place the vision and power of the group far above their personal needs and goals. . . .their lives are characterized by dignity, honesty, and courage. (Blase and Blase, 1997, p. xiii)

Blase and Blase concluded that these principals of schools with a reputation for success believed that they led by developing the talent and commitment of others rather than by "gaining their compliance to rules" (p. viii).

The evolution which had given rise to the current leadership context and processes within Riverview had begun with the arrival of the principal Al Brenneis 11 years before. By "treating others like he wanted to be treated," Al Brenneis had led in the shift within the school culture which had resulted in the respectful environment built on trusting relationships where he was most often viewed by students and staff as "one among equals." Al Brenneis had led in the conversations focused on inquiry and shared understanding which were characteristic of the school culture where adults and students were striving to become self-managing and their "own bosses." The conversations described in the opening of the case report illustrated the inquiring and dialogic nature of the talk between principal and staff and students. Each conversation, it was stated, "began with a question and concluded with words of praise or humor." In the opening vignette of the case report, "The Bonding Walk," Al Brenneis was depicted as a supporter and caregiver as he helped the young walkers along their 12 kilometer route. In the final vignette, Al Brenneis was shown moving through the spectators, serving coffee and engaging in conversations. Both of these scenes illustrate the kind of principal leadership which Blase and Blase (1997) described above as that "characterized by dignity, honesty and courage" (p. viii).

These scenes also illustrate principal leadership to which Sergiovanni referred as "moral leadership" and "servant leadership" (1992).

In a similar vein, Barth (1990) contended that the most crucial role fulfilled by the principal was that of "head learner, engaging in the most important enterprise of the schoolhouse--experiencing, displaying, modeling, and celebrating what it is hoped and expected that teachers and pupils will do " (pp. 45-46). Lambert et al. (1995) argued for the shift from the exercise of "power over" and "working through people," to principal leadership where power is facilitative and occurs through networks of trusting relationships (p. 100). In discussing how schools which are traditionally hierarchical could move from leadership which exercises "power over," to leadership which facilitates, they argued that school leaders including principals needed: (1) A sense of purpose and ethics. (2) Facilitation skills. (3) An understanding of constructivist learning for all humans. (4) A deep understanding of change and transitions. (5) An understanding of the school context. (6) A personal identity that allows for courage and risk, low ego needs and a sense of possibilities (pp. 101-102). In their conception of collaborative school leadership, these skills and attributes were eventually required of all school members (p. 29). They argued that the goal of designated leadership teams should be to create an educational community capable of building a common purpose for schooling (p. 103).

At Riverview School, Al Brenneis and vice principal Greg Jordan were head learners in the shift away from "power over" to "power with" others. The shift in their own style of principal leadership had occurred over time, as had the shift in what staff, students, and parents expected from the principal leadership of the school. Their teaching of students and interactions with staff as they conducted their administrative duties provided ethical models of leadership which facilitated and enabled others.

Staff Professionalism

As "one among equals," both principals believed that they led by developing the talent and commitment of others, rather than by gaining student and staff compliance to rules. Al Brenneis insisted that it was "not just us" as he referred to the organizational authority exercised by Greg Jordan, the vice principal, and himself. Reflecting on the shared authority and professional autonomy among the staff, Al Brenneis referred to the staff as "the people who made things happen." The high level of commitment and professionalism among the staff at Riverview became evident to me over the time that I spent studying the school. Lee, Smerdon, McMahon and Curtis (1997) concluded from their study of six sites that "teachers' and schools' beliefs about the capabilities of their students influence the strategies they use to teach students with a wide range of academic competence" (p. 7). The commitment of all Riverview staff members to individual student learning was captured by Roger Irvin when he claimed that each student "comes to us with his or her own unique gifts and talents." All nine staff respondents spoke of the importance of the broad based program offered in all subject areas within the school. It was the belief of all of these respondents that each student should have the opportunity to set goals, attain those goals, and feel successful regardless of his or her ability level. This prevalent belief in the potential of each student and the necessity of a "level playing field" underscored the professional attitude of the staff which I observed and about which I heard repeatedly from parents and students.

Rallis (1989) made the claim that teachers were catalysts, guides, interpreters and facilitators in the learning process, and not "tellers" or disseminators of information. Rallis put forth the contention that teaching was leading (p. 102). Lambert et al. (1996) also put forward the contention that teaching was leading. From the perspectives of Rallis and Lambert et al., there were several instances included in the case report on Riverview School where teaching could be interpreted as leading. In the section of the case report titled, "Staff Members," for example, there were multiple illustrations of staff members acting as guides, counselors, coaches, their own bosses, and learners. Interestingly, though all of the teacher respondents viewed teaching within the school in a similar way, none referred to their guiding, coaching, counseling, or innovative activities as acts of leadership. By not using the words "leader" and "leadership," this group of respondents emphasized the problem of linking traditional conceptions of school leadership with teacher professionalism. Lambert et al. (1996) framed the problem within current ways of thinking about school leadership and teacher professionalism:

> From first-year teachers who are capable of leading children through their learning and of constructing self-knowledge about that leadership role, to experienced teachers who are skilled in their colleagueship with other adults, we have seen exemplary approaches to leadership--if we choose to name what they do as such. As teachers make meaning with their students, they are participants in the collaborative construction of knowledge. It is ironic that, even through teachers' leadership is often dismissed as child care, we can look to classroom teaching as a source for metaphors of the roles of leaders. . . . (pp. 120-121)

Commitment to Learning

Individualized learning and achievement were emphasized and highlighted in the section within the case report on Riverview School titled, "Measuring Success:"

> Success seemed to be an intrinsic quality of Riverview School, defined and measured in ways which revolved around individual learning and achievement. In this highly diversified and inclusive environment, individuals had multiple opportunities to experience success. . . . Students tended to define success first and foremost in terms of their own performance and achievement in curricular and extra-curricular activities. Although they felt some pressure to do their best, to "beat themselves," as Elizabeth had said, it seemed unacceptable to set goals of "winning" that might entail undermining the achievement and success of another.

The story of Carolyn's pride in achieving her first high school credit is a poignant example of the common focus on learning within the school. Through her understanding and commitment to the "common purpose" of Riverview School, Carolyn was in her way contributing to what Lambert et al. (1996) referred as the "leadership capacity" of schools:

> New metaphors for leadership are necessary. The term constructivist leader offers many possibilities beyond those we have inherited from the patriarchy. . . . Teachers, as constructivist leaders of children's and adults' learning, can lend different metaphors for leadership. Their contributions, however, will not be embraced within old paradigms of school organization. . . . The historic paradigm of stratified leadership is with us still. And the creation of new or different metaphors for leadership remains the challenge before us. (pp. 120-121)

The new metaphor for leadership suggests a new view of organization where effectiveness is measured in terms of the "learning capacity." Morgan (1997) through his use of the brain metaphor presented a compelling argument for considering the learning capacity of organizations:

> In this world, where rapid change and transformation are becoming the norm, organizations face new challenges. In addition to planning and executing tasks in an efficient rational way, they face the challenge of constant learning and, perhaps even more important, of learning to learn. (p. 83)

In his discussion of cybernetics, citing the landmark work of Argyris and Schon (1978) on double loop learning, Morgan (1997) suggested that learning organizations must develop capacities that allow them to:

> - scan and anticipate change in the wider environment to detect significant variations.
> - develop an ability to question, challenge, and change operating norms and assumptions.
> - allow an appropriate strategic direction and pattern of organization to emerge.
> - evolve designs that allow them to become skilled in the art of double-loop learning, to avoid getting trapped in single-loop processes, especially those created by traditional management control systems and the defensive routines of organizational members. (p. 90)

The strength of thinking of organizations in this way is that members have the potential of breaking free of traditional views of organizational life patterned on beliefs of "bounded rationality" (p. 83); they have the potential of embracing patterns of behavior that are interdependent and founded on authentic relationships focused on the creation of shared meaning and understanding. It is the continuous learning of individuals supported by a network of authentic relationships which comprise the synergy within an organization, the impression that pervasive learning is occurring. My contention here is this synergy is leadership. This view of organization and leadership is unconventional. This view of organization and leadership, however, is resonant with the perspectives of the 19 respondents and my own observations and study of Riverview School.

CHAPTER 6

EVERGREEN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL CASE STUDY REPORT

This chapter includes key aspects of the inter-relationship among the perceptions of the ten student, two parent, and ten staff respondents from Evergreen Community High School. These perceptions have been presented in narrative format and have been organized under the headings: "School as Community;" "Diversity in Community;" "Students . . . ;" "Staff Members . . . ;" "Tensions Within Evergreen;" "Measuring Success;" and "Celebrating Community." These headings correspond to the categories which emerged from the analysis of the data which was undertaken after the data collection from both school sites had been completed.

A summary of the findings from the data analysis conducted prior to writing this case study report can be found in Chapter 8 in the section titled, "Leadership in Evergreen Community High School."

School As Community

Community In Action

The bright mid-day sun was partially blocked by the movements of the young people trying to find a comfortable place to sit on the long window ledge. Students and staff members who had crowded into the student lounge were waiting for the school meeting to begin. In spite of the unseasonably warm November temperatures, the students entering the room were wearing several layers of loose fitting clothing and winter coats. Some were also wearing toques that they had pulled down tightly over their heads to cover their ears. Smiles, hugs, and laughter were interwoven into the multiple conversations going on within the room. These interactions counterbalanced the intensity of the discussions taking place around the topic of this afternoon's meeting. Open in front of various individuals were the small blue and white pamphlets entitled *Excellence in Education: High School Reform.* Intermittently, people would point to their copy of the document, or raise it in a clenched hand as if to punctuate an argument or clarify their position on the current debate about educational reform.

Occupants of the crowded couches, chairs, and benches made space for the school members who continued to pour into the room during the final minutes before the meeting was called to order. I leaned against the bookcase at the back of the room watching the activity and studying my copy of the government paper. When one of the young men seated on the narrow wooden bench in front of the bookcase recognized that I was a visitor to the school, he smiled, stood, and motioned for me to take his spot. As I moved toward the crowded bench, a space slowly emerged between two young women who smiled, then pulled their coats closer around themselves in an effort to accommodate me and make me feel welcome.

At one o'clock, one of the female staff members who was dressed in jeans rose to outline the agenda for the afternoon. The talk and debate subsided as those present focused their attention on what was being said, waiting for their cue to become involved in the proceedings. Amazingly, neither stage nor microphone was used or required to address this gathering of more than one hundred people. It was difficult from where I sat at the back of the room to see the teacher, but the importance of her message was not lost on this group who had come together to consider the impact of the Ontario Government's proposals for high school reform. The teacher outlined the four main aspects of the government's discussion paper and then turned the meeting over to the principal whom she called by his first name. "Doug will explain what these proposed changes mean in terms of Board policy and how they will affect high school education in general and alternative high schools in particular," she began. "Please ask your questions before we break into our Advisory Groups. In your groups, you might want to talk about ways to provide the government with meaningful feedback in the four areas they have designated for consultation." The hush within the room and the nodding heads were indications that these school members were accustomed to participating in such forums; they were engaged in the spirit of today's event.

The principal in thanking the teacher also called her by her first name. As principal of six small alternative high schools, Doug's role was not to become overly involved in the day-to-day life and work of each school. He did not often take part in the school meetings at Evergreen, and his presence this afternoon contributed to the sense of urgency and anticipation that permeated the atmosphere within the student lounge that was packed to overflowing. Still wearing his overcoat and carrying his hat, Doug began his explanation; "With the amalgamation of school boards there may be some changes in how our Board is required to operate its high school programs. Up until now the Board has been very supportive of the alternative high schools, but with the proposed changes in funding that could change." All of the students were listening attentively; some even took notes. "Please let your parents know that the government is requesting feedback on the proposed reforms before the end of November," Doug continued. "The Board of Directors will be meeting this afternoon to plan a parent meeting for one evening next week. The purpose of today's school meeting as I understand it, is to respond formally or informally to the discussion paper." As he finished delivering his message, several raised hands appeared from within the audience. "What will happen to students who need courses in English as a second language if there is no more funding for such programs?" queried one student. "That move to discontinue funding will discriminate against one in three school age children within Metro Toronto," the same student concluded emphatically. "What will happen to classes and teachers if kids who need special education are put into regular classrooms? That isn't going to benefit the students or the teacher," asserted another student. Each question and student comment seemed to mark an incremental growth in individual awareness that was occurring throughout the room, while energizing the overall discussion going on between and among all of the attendees.

Before breaking into smaller groups for further talk and strategizing, Liz, the teacher who had organized this afternoon's meeting, suggested taking a ten minute break. As the young people moved out of the student lounge towards the classrooms where their individual Advisory Groups were to meet, the tone became conversational once again. The school members heading outside for a cigarette break continued the discussion as they edged toward the double doors leading out to the street and the small area adjacent to the school where the students who smoked liked to congregate. Liz invited me to walk with her to the neighboring deli to get a cup of coffee before the Advisory Groups met. As we left the school grounds and passed by the gathering of people who were smoking, we could both hear fragments of the on-going discussion. One of the staff members had joined the group and was fueling the debate with her thoughtful analysis of the reform document. The students were responding to her comments with insights and belief statements of their own. Liz sensed that I had been drawn in by the fervor of the debate and could see that I was impressed by the staff and students' knowledge and rhetorical skills. "A lot of these kids have parents who were part of the counter-culture movement of the 1970s," she explained without being asked. "I guess that several of the staff members could be considered counter-culture as well." When I commented on the unusual but intriguing blend of liberal humanism and passion that I had observed and heard in the exchanges thus far, Liz assured me that the students who had spoken at the meeting were representative of those who had been part of the school community over the 17 years that she had been a teacher there. "Our students tend to be very articulate young people who are alternative in their thinking as well as in their dress. As teachers, we try and encourage independent thinking." As way of further confirmation, she added, "You will hear a great deal of questioning as well as debate in the classrooms that you visit."

Democracy At The Ground Level

By the end of the afternoon as the Advisory Groups summarized and reported their ideas, there was a growing sense of student resolve. Complying with the government's directive to complete the survey in the appendix of the blue and white pamphlet was not considered a valid measure of "good citizenship" within this group of young people concerned about equality and social justice. No one within the student group felt that their views would be adequately represented by conforming in this way. Although none of these students would be directly affected by the proposed legislation and changes, they were unanimous in their commitment to question those advocating reform. Before the school meeting was officially adjourned for the day, a "Students For Action Committee" was struck and a meeting was planned in order to draft an appropriate response to the government's discussion paper.

Later that afternoon at the Board of Directors meeting, the two parent representatives in consort with the principal, two staff members, two student representatives, and one community member created a plan to involve parents in providing meaningful feedback before the government's November 29 deadline. These parents, like their children, felt compelled to address an educational agenda that went beyond a discussion of attendance, high school credits, and university entrance requirements. These parents, like their children, were mobilized by their concern for the future of public education and the well-being of others who would follow. That evening when I left the school, I recalled an earlier conversation that I had had with the principal. Over the course of the day's events, I realized that I had become a participant in, as well as a witness to, the "democracy at the ground level" to which he had referred and of which I had become aware during the first visit to the school a month earlier.

Diversity In Community

An Unconventional Blend of Traditional And Modern

The train ride from the suburbs into the city that first morning seemed longer than I remembered. Downtown Toronto looked dreary but somehow timeless in the October rain that had begun to fall. During the short taxi ride from Union Station to the school, the cab driver delivered his views on the current state of the Ontario economy and what he called the "drastic measures" being taken by the Harris government to deal with the provincial deficit. Undeterred by the incessant drizzle, two young men dressed in ragged clothing on the corner of Yonge and King Streets were approaching people and asking for money. In the few moments that we sat waiting for the traffic light to change, three elegantly dressed business people interrupted their brisk stride to deposit coins into the extended baseball caps. Traveling along King street, we passed several recognizable landmarks of "Old Toronto." The King Edward Hotel had been renovated since my last visit to the city and radiated Old World charm. Through the rain drenched window of the cab, St. James Cathedral, Regent Park, the St. Lawrence Marketplace, and George Brown College appeared in succession. The various art shops and boutiques on either side of the street were animated by the coming and going of curious shoppers who systematically opened and closed brightly colored umbrellas as they traveled from one store to the next.

In an effort to deposit me at the front door of the school, the driver made the tour of the short block and stopped on the narrow side street adjacent to the rear entrance. The old two-storey brick building was partially enclosed by a seven foot high wire mesh fence which, like some kind of porous membrane, separated the school from its inner city neighborhood. The large tree at the front of the school had been pruned several times over the years; its gnarled roots protruded through the brown patches of lawn. In spite of the rain, three youths were shooting baskets in the asphalt yard on the east side of the building. The temporary wooden structure on the west side of the building was a sign that some kind of renovation or repair was underway. Above the wooden structure, inscribed on the limestone cornerstone located under the eaves was, "Public School 1887 A.D." On the modern white sign affixed to the brick wall by the school entrance was written, "Evergreen: A Community High School." Under the sign, three students stood smoking, unaffected by the inclement weather. They interrupted their conversation in response to my inquiry, smiled, and pointed to the recessed entrance a few meters away.

In the draft created from the opening and closing of the double doors, the suspended silk-screened banner bearing an image of the Planet Earth gently swayed back and forth in front of the central light fixture of the main foyer. On the bulletin boards that lined both sides of the front hallway leading into the foyer were Polaroid pictures of smiling adolescents and adults dressed in casual summer clothes. Names and humorous comments were written on the white borders of each of the prints and the heading for the display read, "Pizza and Polaroids." There were several announcements posted on the bulletin boards including one entitled, "Outreach Program: Advisory Groups." Judging from the absence of surnames on the pictures and announcements, students and staff within the school were known to one another by their first names. The blackboard located in the foyer in direct view of the entrance carried the date and the daily announcements including an invitation to all staff and students to participate in a bowlarama. Written below the invitation was the humorous claim that "Bowling is not like golf. You can't lose the balls." Plastic replicas of bowling pins had been strung across the foyer as if to emphasize that this was a fun event open to all. Directly above the announcement board was a brightly colored mural, and to the right was a wooden display case with several pictures, books, and coffee mugs which bore the school's name as well as the symbol of the Yin and Yang. Leaning against the wall on top of the display case was a commemorative plaque with a list of former Evergreen students who had fought for King and country in the last World War. To the right of the blackboard and display case was an open door leading into a room which held student desks and several computers. Through one of the windows in this classroom, the sun had begun to shine as the morning rain gave way to a light drizzle. The CN Tower could be seen through the dissipating mist. Its presence was a reminder that this school and its inhabitants were part of a larger urban community, a contender in the global market place.

The glass doors on either side of the blackboard revealed another smaller foyer with a staircase that wound its way from the ground to the second floor. Potted trees, geraniums, and other flowering plants had been arranged on the broad landing where the staircase turned. Bulletin boards filled with student work and newspaper clippings lined the wide stairwell. Part way up the stairs was a brightly colored poster with the image of a monopoly game board and the caption, "Toryopoly--Only the Rich Can Play." Another poster boldly encouraged readers to "Organize, Educate, and Resist," by becoming a part of the upcoming Metro Days of Action.

At the top of the staircase was another set of glass doors and four more classrooms that were all similar to, yet unique from the one I had already seen. "Le Chambre d'Art" hung above the most intriguing of the four rooms. Inside, the eclectic collection of completed projects and works in progress filled the large square room giving it a sense of "playfulness." The classroom opposite the art studio was equally inviting with its crisp white walls, colorful posters, and tiled floor that gleamed warmly in the few rays of sun that streamed through the large windows. This room contained more computers. Upcoming events had been neatly written on the slate blackboard at the front of the classroom and confirmed that this was where students learned about the Sciences. A few steps away was another large room with wooden floors. In this classroom was a television with video player, several computers, and an array of interesting posters announcing film classics and noteworthy musical concerts. In the midst of this provocative blend of modern culture and technology stood a twelve inch figurine of "The King," poised as if ready to deliver the performance of a lifetime from the wide blackboard ledge that served as his stage.

The fourth classroom on the second floor was particularly inviting with its warm blue carpet and its lush plants hanging from the ceiling and positioned on window sills. The student desks had been arranged around the perimeters of the square carpet and a pair of well worn couches had been placed along the back wall of the room. On the side blackboard were neatly written lists of the names of female and feminist writers. Above the blackboard at the front of the room, a large piece of paper had been inscribed with the words "Question Authority." Other provocative quotations were interspersed among the student work and posters displayed around the room. The diversity and individuality of the five classrooms that I had visited made me curious about the teachers and students who had created these personal and shared spaces for learning.

Back on the main floor, young people dressed in a variety of casual loose fitting clothes wandered in and out of the large room to the left of the foyer. This room with its couches, arm chairs, book shelves, pop machine, and art work was evidently the student lounge. Music played in the background as three young people worked on what appeared to be an art project. Two others sat on one of the low couches where they engaged in friendly but purposeful conversation. When the pair on the couch noticed me, they smiled and said hello. This animated environment was reminiscent of the bedroom of some creative adolescent who had no time to put things in order before moving on to the next activity and the next challenge.

Adjacent to the lounge was a short narrow hallway leading to another large room called "The Gallery." Inside this room was an apartment sized kitchenette complete with fridge. There were two hand-scripted signs above the sink that was piled high with dirty dishes. "Take 20 seconds and clean your own dishes," coaxed one sign; the other carried a more urgent appeal to peers to keep this area clean. A professionally mounted art show occupied the same room, but seemed a world away from the kitchen. On a table near the doorway lay a guest book containing names of visitors who had taken the time to write encouraging remarks to the artist. In the communal washroom beside The Gallery was another blackboard covered with what appeared to be thoughts to be shared. One inspired individual had written a brief poem satirizing the current government's proposals for educational reform.

The main office was the next location to be explored on the ground floor. As I entered the long narrow room, a small blonde colored poodle rose from her blanket beneath the computer terminal and approached me. Her wagging tail and extended tongue suggested that I had passed the "sniff test," and was welcome to pat her curly head. Her mistress, the alternative school administrator, smiled and nodded at me as she continued her telephone conversation. Tall wooden storage cabinets lined one of the walls. A mixture of older and more recent photographs covered the outside of the cabinets, providing a disjointed but intriguing historical record of the people and events of the school. In the small room at the rear of the office, were a wooden bench, a love seat, two desks, a computer, bookcases and assorted materials, shoes, coats, lunches, and announcement boards full of curriculum information, important dates, and events going on in the school and school district. The sign "principal" was permanently affixed to the door of the room, but seemed out of place in this school with no principal on site. If this small room had at one time been a principal's office, it was now a "staff room," containing "teachers'" belongings.

The Evergreen Spirit

Marion, accompanied by her poodle Sasha, led me across the hallway to the only classroom that I had not yet visited. She tapped gently on the door as the staff meeting was already in progress. The male teacher who responded delivered a warm greeting as he ushered me into the room to meet the others. His youthful appearance, casual dress, and friendly demeanor were as welcoming as the atmosphere within his classroom. Student created dioramas based on the Shakespearean Tragedies were arranged on the multiple bookshelves and tables around the room. Posters of dramatic productions and posters announcing poetry readings were displayed on the walls. Comfortable chairs, a couch, and floor lamps contributed to the "lived in" feeling of this room. The seven staff members who had gathered for the weekly meeting sat in desks arranged in a semi-circle facing the front blackboard. The three men and four women, all dressed in casual attire, enjoyed my interruption as it provided them time to select from the array of refreshments that individuals had brought to share with one another. After introductions were made and I had been offered a freshly brewed cup of cappuccino, the conversation subsided and the discussion resumed. Several topics had been placed on the front blackboard in a variety of handwriting styles. Each staff member had added items to the agenda that she or he felt needed to be communicated and discussed. Large check marks had been drawn beside "Field trips," and "Outreach," indicating the topics with which the group had already dealt. "Mid-term examinations," "Secondary Education Review," and "Students On Probation" remained to be addressed.

The meeting had no official chairperson and participants took turns speaking and being heard. The intensity of the discussion increased or decreased depending on the speaker's level of conviction and the reaction of the group. Over the course of the next two hours, I watched and listened, as if witness to some important parliamentary procedure where committed participants debated each topic while striving to convince and understand self and others before coming to a decision and moving on. The tension among the participants was greatest during the discussion of the "Students on Probation." This term referred to students who were in breach of one or more of "THE THREE RULES." In answer to my puzzled look, one of the teachers handed me a small booklet called the Green Book. Inside this school handbook were THE THREE RULES written in bold upper case letters: ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY; OUTREACH IS MANDATORY; RECREATIONAL MIND-ALTERING SUBSTANCES ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED. As transgressions were described and as strategies for dealing with the students who were repeat offenders were agreed upon, it became apparent that these were not rigid rules, but rather broad policies which provided latitude in interpretation and application. Individual differences were recognized and accounted for; there were no "winners" and "losers" in this process.

During the two hour meeting, there was no voting, no "majority rule" invoked within this group committed to including and understanding the diverse voices within the school community. In the classroom with the blue carpet was a poster that proclaimed, "Without Struggle There Can Be No Progress." In this gathering of highly energized, passionate, and compassionate teachers, I sensed a willingness to take up the struggle on the full range of educational issues. How, I wondered, did this group of people concerned about inclusion and consensus measure "progress"?

Before leaving the school that afternoon, I paused for a moment in the main foyer. There was a special feeling that permeated this old school building. Weathered wood, polished linoleum, well-used books, paper, chalk dust, couches, computers, flowering plants, and above all the talk, debate and laughter that I had experienced during this initial visit had created a powerful sense of place. "Evergreen is a very good school," one School Board official had shared with me during an earlier conversation. "It is not, however, representative of secondary schools in Metro Toronto." This alternative secondary school, I was learning, was an unconventional blend of the traditional and modern.

The History And Philosophy Of Evergreen

The "Free School Movement" of the 1970s gave rise to the dramatic increase in popularity of alternative secondary school education during the 1980s. The City of Toronto was considered a leader in alternative schooling, offering a broad variety of elementary and secondary programs from which to choose within its public school system. A 1986 Ontario provincial report on a study that had been conducted on alternative schools revealed that most alternative secondary schools attracted staff, parents, and students who shared a philosophy of schooling which emphasized a decentralized administrative structure and an innovative curriculum. Positive features cited within the review included: the small size of most alternative schools, the personalized instruction, the trusting learning environment, the large degree of parental involvement in the establishment and governance of the schools, the creative use of community resources, the high level of self-motivation among the learners, and the equality and shared accountability among students, staff, and parents (Toronto

Board of Education, 1989). Several of these descriptors seemed to "fit" Evergreen Community High School

Founded in the early 1970s by a group of individuals who had been influenced by the counter-culture movement of the 1960s, Evergreen began as a small private high school governed by a Board of Directors elected from the community. Parents, staff, students, and community members participated in making decisions about school curricula and the daily operation of the school. Evergreen had become an alternative high school within the Toronto Public School system in 1978, and with that change acquired a designated principal who was shared among the six alternative high schools within the Toronto Board. Although the principal communicated regularly with the school, s/he did not intervene in the daily administration unless required or asked to become involved. Teacher coordinators chosen from the staff and by the staff each year acted as representatives of the principal within the school. Although the Coordinators assumed responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the school, important decisions were made in a consensual manner by the entire staff at the weekly staff meetings. The Board of Directors was maintained from the original private school model and comprised two students, two parents, and two teachers who were elected from their respective groups. The principal and one elected community member were also Directors on the Board. This body considered proposals received from school members or from the Toronto Board. From these proposals, new policies and directions for the school were formulated. Before final ratification and implementation, all proposed changes were presented at a school meeting for approval from the General Membership which included all students, parents, and staff.

Although there was always some lingering fear among its inhabitants that Evergreen was, over time, becoming more like other "mainstream high schools," the school had somehow managed to retain its uniqueness. Its distinctive school logo, the Yin and Yang, its shared decision making, its democratic model of governance, its innovative curriculum, and its inclusive philosophy alluded to its historical origins and had become, over time, integral facets of the culture of the school. In the introduction to the handbook where I had read THE THREE RULES, I had also read that:

> Evergreen is a school based upon community involvement and strong support for individual expression. There is tolerance and latitude for this expression within the written rules of the school and within the behavioral standards

> which reflect the ethos of the community. The Evergreen community comprises parents, students, and staff, working together to create a unique learning environment.

Along with THE THREE RULES, certain Codes of Behavior were also outlined in the Green Book. These were expressed as expectations, and were not written in upper case letters as the rules had been:

> (a) Racial and sexual/gender equality is a fundamental right for every member of the school community. Behavior, including verbal slurs, contrary to this code, is inappropriate and will have consequences.
>
> (b) Responsibility for the physical quality of the school is shared by the community, and vandalism will elicit an appropriate response.
>
> (c) The entire school community shares responsibility to maintain a co-operative, safe, and stimulating learning environment. To this end, disruptive behavior in and out of the class will be considered a serious breach of this code.

Prospective students interested in attending Evergreen Community High School were required to come to a meeting where the rules and codes of behavior, as well as the school program were explained. Before being accepted into the school, all students went through an interview with staff and peers during which time they were asked to explain how their personal and academic goals "fit" within the overall philosophical framework of the school. Students fondly referred to this mutually negotiated screening process as "being CEASAed."

The Committee on Evaluation, Academic Standards and Admissions, or "CEASA," consisted of a rotating panel of two students and two teachers selected from a pool of ten students and seven teachers. CEASA was the committee that interviewed prospective students. It was also the "problem-solving" body within the school. Teachers or students who felt that there had been some transgression of a rule, or a breech of the code of behavior could request a meeting with CEASA. During a problem-solving CEASA, all "sides" had the opportunity to speak and be heard. Questions, debate and sometimes argument were part of the process, after which the CEASA would make a recommendation and then forward it to the Teacher Coordinators for a decision. Any appeals were referred to the Board of Directors. Over the time that I spent at Evergreen, I found that all students to whom I talked could not only recite and paraphrase the rules and expectations, they also understood and accepted them. Many students wanted to be elected to serve on CEASA. Most believed that CEASA was a fair and just way to solve the daily concerns that arose when individuals with diverse interests and goals endeavored to learn in community.

The THREE RULES, The Codes of Behavior, and CEASA provided a framework within which students were free to select and pursue individual academic and personal goals. Students were free to self-identify and free to interact with other "refugees from the mainstream" who had chosen the Evergreen experience.

Students . . .
. . . As Refugees From The Mainstream

"Everyone at Evergreen has come here because they have had a difficult time at other schools. We all feel a bond and get along because of that," explained Shannon, a grade 11 student who had been at Evergreen for almost a year. She had attended private schools when she was younger and a large secondary school for grades nine, ten, and part of grade eleven. "There were 2 600 students at Elmwood Collegiate and it was pretty crazy. I couldn't be an individual. I was a number." As Shannon told her stories about Elmwood, her speech quickened and her voice took on a higher pitch. "I started to have problems in grade 10 and I thought it was me. When I left the school in grade 11, I realized it wasn't just me. There were a lot of problems with that school including harassment issues that aren't dealt with." Because no grade nine courses and only a few grade 10 courses were offered at Evergreen, all of the students had been to at least one other high school. Like Shannon, most students had chosen to come to Evergreen during their grade 11 year. Most students measured their time at Evergreen in semesters. On average, students spent three to five semesters, or two to three years at this alternative high school. Shannon's stories about her experiences at Evergreen mirrored the values that were implicit in the Codes of Behavior. For all nine students whom I interviewed, Evergreen was a haven, an "escape from the mainstream."

"I had a problem back at my old school," began Jas. "Teachers would start asking me stupid questions about assignments, or why I was a few minutes late for class. I honestly think that students nearing adulthood want to be treated differently," he contended. "They want to be treated with respect." In his quiet and matter of fact tone, Jas told of a negative encounter that he had had with what he referred to as "the office." Two years before, due to personal concerns, he often went hungry. One day at school when he was particularly hungry, Jas had taken out a chocolate bar in class and began eating it. When caught by the teacher, he had been delivered with an ultimatum. He was to put the chocolate bar away or be prepared to face the consequences; no questions were asked or answered. His disobedience that day earned him a trip to the vice principal's office. The punitive manner of the administrator caused Jas to resist even more. His punishment for questioning and resisting authority was a full day in-school suspension. "The vice principal told me to sit in this room. I was not supposed to do school work. I was just supposed to sit there for the day. It didn't make any sense." Jas was 18 years old and had been at Evergreen for three semesters; he would be eligible to graduate from high school at the end of the school year. His teachers and peers respected him and several had commented on his maturity, sensitivity, and intellectual potential. What Jas claimed to like the most about his Evergreen experience was being treated with respect, being treated like an adult, and having the freedom to make decisions. "If I am hungry, I eat. If I am late, it's my problem. If I miss school or don't get my assignments done, I am the one who misses out. I make the decision. I take responsibility," he explained. As Jas reflected on that unforgettable trip to the vice principal's office, he concluded, "At that moment I was a kid who needed to be listened to and heard. I didn't need to hear about the school rules and why I should conform or be punished."

In spite of individual differences, all students who had left the mainstream to come to Evergreen felt that they belonged. They felt special because they had "chosen" this school with the Three Rules and Codes of Behavior. Because of the CEASA process that they had all undergone before being accepted, they also believed that they had been "chosen" to attend this school. This sense of belonging and of being special formed the foundation for the strong relationships between and among individuals within this high school community. These trusting relationships built on respect for differences allowed students the freedom to explore their individuality and the confidence to create their own space.

. . . Create Their Own Space

"The change in Alicia was immediate," commented one mother who was still in awe of the transformation that had occurred when her daughter had arrived at Evergreen over two years before. Alicia was a student who had gone to an alternative private elementary school and alternative public junior high school. Although Alicia had opted for the local public high school, she left the mainstream to investigate the public alternative high schools in the city after a disappointing grade nine and ten experience. "From the first day that I visited Evergreen, I knew that I could live and go to school here," Alicia said in an excited tone as she described her first impressions of the school. "I came and sat in on a couple of classes one afternoon and was blown away. People talked to me as if I mattered and deserved to be there. 'What was this?' I remember wondering. How could I be important enough to talk to and listen to, when they didn't even know me?'" Over the two years that Alicia had been at the school, she had liked the way that she had been allowed the freedom to explore her own identity and unleash her creativity. "I like knowing that this school is all my space. If I wanted to plant a garden outside, I could. That's how much freedom I feel I have." In very eloquent and poetic terms, she described the quality which she felt allowed for individual freedom and diversity within the school. "We all have our own idea about Utopia when we come to Evergreen, and we are all trying to get there. It's the creating our own space and the trying to get there that is important and that makes us a community." All of the other students to whom I spoke were as confident about the supportive bonds between and among people within the school. "I know that I can be who I want to be," concluded Alicia. "I will always be accepted. I will always have a voice."

"It's friendly and there is a lot of respect. Students and teachers are on an equal footing and really listen to each other's ideas even when they don't agree," exclaimed Hillary, one of the friendly students whom I had met that first day when I had ventured into the student lounge. "There is no pressure to conform. When people are friendly and respectful, there is a lot of trust. People feel free to express themselves." Hillary, an Ontario Academic Credit student in her first semester at the school, had left a large academic collegiate to attend Evergreen. She had heard about the school's academic reputation and liked the way that it had been represented in a recent magazine article where it had been described as a school for the "misfit elite." The small size and friendly atmosphere were particularly appealing after her experience at the larger high school. She liked the community feeling in the school and enjoyed spending her spare time in the student lounge talking to the students and teachers whom she had met. "It's great talking to people who care so much about ideas. In my old school, there were cliques and if you didn't do sports you weren't cool. Teachers never talked to students outside of the classroom," she claimed. "I like having discussions with people who are different than I am and who will disagree with me. By arguing and debating I learn more about myself and what I really believe."

Occasionally, teachers and students came together to design and negotiate a shared space. This was the first semester, for example, that an all female Women In Literature class had been offered at the school. Gail was the teacher who had spearheaded the move to create a "women's space," where young female students would feel secure and free to explore their female identity in-depth. With the support of colleagues and students, Gail had made it happen.

The day that I visited the Women In Literature Class, I was immediately struck by the calm, positive human energy that pervaded this room with the blue carpet. A very diverse group of young women occupied couches, chairs, and desks. Three or four lounged on pillows arranged comfortably on the carpeted floor. Most of the twenty or so students appeared to be 17 or 18 years old, although some were younger. The quiet but lively instrumental music that was playing provided the backdrop for the reflective writing in which the students were engaged. As I sat watching the students, Gail handed me a piece of paper that outlined this activity that was called "writing down the bones." Through the practice of "burning through to first thoughts," the author of the article explained, writers of all ages could access that individual creative energy that was "unobstructed by social politeness or the internal censor." Today, students were writing in response to a quotation from Golda Meir that had been placed on the board. This exercise served as the introduction for the viewing of a documentary film featuring Alice Walker, the author of *The Color Purple*. "Dreams are the strongest messages that we are sent," stated Walker as the interview was wrapping up. "We must listen to our dreams." This group of women seemed to be doing just that as they together explored their personal beliefs and their intellectual, physical, and spiritual identities. One of the older students who was wearing a fashionable black outfit with a dramatic blonde hairstyle and artistic jewelry, came over to where I was sitting in order to talk to me and let me know how important this particular class was to her. She spent an hour on public transit each morning and afternoon in order to get to the school for this course. "There is nothing like this in any other high school in the city," she whispered excitedly. "Several of us have come to Evergreen especially for this course."

Near the end of that class period, the discussion turned into a brainstorming session where students tried to come up with a meaningful way to commemorate the eighth anniversary of the December 6th Montreal Massacre, during which 14 female college students had been murdered. After several ideas had been suggested, taken up, and discarded, one of the students suddenly blurted out, "A womb. We could transform The Gallery into a warm pink womb." As the student continued, she elaborated upon her ideas by adding hand gestures and facial expressions that drew the attention of the others who listened attentively at first, and then slowly began nodding their heads. "We could have poems, music, and candles," another student interjected. "We could still have a ceremony, but then let people go through the exhibit," added another. With this last comment, everyone listening became so excited by the idea that they all began to talk at once. The concept of "The Womb" was one that was resonant for all of the young women in that class. They all could envisage the womb; they all had ideas of how to create the womb; they all understood what they wanted to communicate through this particular metaphor.

Over the following two weeks, the students from the Women In Literature class met regularly to work on the design and construct the exhibit. Large bedsheets were dyed pink and draped in mystical fashion along one of the walls in The Gallery. Poems were scripted on parchment. Pictures, media articles, cushions, music, incense, candles, and 14 red roses were added as finishing touches. In the short hallway leading into The Gallery, the students had posted media articles which addressed issues of violence against women. They also had posted their own writing and thoughts on violence, oppression, and social injustices that they perceived inherent in what they called "the power structure of the dominant paradigm." At the bottom of the wide staircase leading to the second floor, the men within the school had mounted their own exhibit in response to the myriad of issues that had been raised.

The aura within the school was reverent and deeply spiritual on December 6th. This group of young women had succeeded in communicating their feelings and beliefs through the creation of this unique space, a space where women and men could come together and share in women's energy within the larger school community.

. . . Set Their Own Boundaries

"I think that everyone does work together," affirmed Barbara. "It's not like the teachers are the authority and the students have to listen and do as they are told. We all go by our first names. The teachers respect us and we respect each other.

We're equals," stated Barbara emphatically. To further illustrate that there were no artificial boundaries separating students, she added, "I don't even know who the younger students are because we are all in the same classes together. We don't go by age or grades here. We all have equal power here." Barbara had been at Evergreen for over two years and in that time had gone from being a student who had been placed on probation because of attendance problems, to being a well-respected honors student elected by her peers as their representative on CEASA.

"The key to the feeling of community around here is the mutual respect that is going on in all of the relationships," concluded Barbara. "When we have a CEASA, people listen and accept the decision. They may not initially be happy with the decision if they don't get their way, but they know that they have been heard and that the process has been fair." When either teachers or students had concerns or complaints about what was happening within the school, they had the power and right to request a meeting with CEASA. Individuals could expect the elected CEASA to work together to confront problems and resolve the differences in a consensual and inclusive manner. CEASA was one way that students and teachers negotiated the bounds of individual needs and behavior within the collectivity.

New students at Evergreen were occasionally overwhelmed by the sense of freedom and the few rules and restrictions which they encountered within the school. All nine students whom I interviewed had initially experienced some challenge when it came to establishing personal goals. Ben, a grade 10 student, commented on his lack of concern for school work when he first started to attend Evergreen. "I really thought it was going to be a slacker school because it was an alternative school. I soon figured out these people were serious. People here really want to learn. This school has very high standards," he continued. "You have to be prepared to work really hard." Jas explained that, "This school is a haven for those who get in. People don't realize how valuable it is until they arrive and then they realize that they are in a school where because they are treated like adults they can slack off or work. They can do what they want to do with their time." During Jas' first semester at Evergreen, he had been what he called a "slacker." He now proudly referred to himself as one of the "go-getters." He was achieving honors in all of his courses and was making plans to attend university. He explained what he believed the purpose of "school probation" to be. "At Evergreen, people take a look at the rule book and then they say, 'These rules apply in certain situations but not in this one. We have to bend it for you.' Rules here are flexible and are just guidelines to help keep order. The rules allow everyone to progress." Although students occasionally found themselves on probation for poor academic performance, poor attendance, or missed Outreach assignments, very few needed a prolonged period of supervision. Most students seemed to recognize and accept the responsibility of setting goals for performance and boundaries for behavior within this school community where they experienced a great deal of freedom.

Sheila was a parent who had two sons who had attended Evergreen. Through her sons' experiences and her own knowledge of the philosophy of alternative schools, she had come to appreciate the lack of hierarchical structures within Evergreen. As a parent elected to sit on the Board of Directors, she was very familiar with the model of shared governance used at Evergreen. "Ultimately, we do not want our children to rely on the rules," she explained. "We want them to understand that rules are simply guidelines to be there while they develop their own set of internal cues of control. It's that set of controlling values that will help them throughout their lives determine whether something is right or wrong, whether something is beneficial or not. People who require an external structure to understand the world and how it functions are a different group to me than people who rely on having internalized these abilities." Sheila's elder son had graduated and was now sharing an apartment with two other Evergreen graduates in Montreal where they attended Concordia University. "I believe," Sheila concluded, "students who attend and graduate from Evergreen are people who are able to set their own boundaries."

The understanding, respect, and trust between and among the adults and adolescents at Evergreen created an environment of freedom and support wherein individual students created their own space, set their own boundaries, and set their own agenda for learning and achievement.

. . . Set Their Own Agenda

CEASA was one way in which student decision making gave students a sense of in-put and control over their life at school. The timetabling process was another. With no principal and no counselor on staff, students worked with the teacher who had been assigned to them as their Advisor in order to determine which courses they required and could take. After mid-term examinations each semester, there was a Guidance Day where the teachers met with each student in their Advisory Group in order to review that student's scholastic record, and in order to encourage individual short and long term goal-setting. It was during this process that students selected and registered their vote for course offerings for the following semester. With a total school population of 120 students and seven teachers, not all courses could be offered each semester. Because most Evergreen students were serious about getting a high school diploma and attending post-secondary institutions, the vote often resulted in a great number of academic and Ontario Academic Credit courses being offered. Although some students had to consider such options as summer school in order to complete the requirements for high school graduation, the students to whom I spoke felt that they had had considerable control in establishing their own timetable.

When I asked students and parents about the Outreach Program, "wonderful," "amazing," and "incredible" were typical responses that were echoed throughout the interviews. "Yesterday, I looked like a Christmas tree with ground glass sprinkled all over my face and clothes," laughed Ben. "I am the first student who has gotten a placement in a stained glass shop. I would like to keep the placement when I am finished Outreach," he exclaimed. Ben was very proud of his first Outreach project. "The people at the shop are wonderful. When I go on Wednesday they always have a new story to tell me about what has happened. It's a great place. It's a lot of work but I really like it."

Each Wednesday morning was dedicated to the Outreach Program during which time all students participated in a self-initiated and self-directed project that involved working for a non-profit organization, an academic/career exploration, or a personal enrichment program. Students could not receive payment for their work; their participation in these self-initiated community projects was voluntary and focused on experiential learning. Near the end of each semester, sponsors and students came together for a day at the school when it was incumbent upon the students to demonstrate what they had learned during the course of their Outreach projects. Students were awarded credit by their Advisor provided they accomplished the goals that they had set for themselves at the outset of the project. The actual projects were as diverse as the students who had designed them and carried them through. Placements in carpentry, with the Humane Society, in art studios, at hospitals, and with literary magazines were just a few that were mentioned. "Outreach is the most wonderful program," stated Hillary. "I wish that I had come to Evergreen sooner. There are so many projects that I would like to do."

Underpinning the sense of individual freedom and equality afforded by student involvement in CEASA and the timetabling process was the belief that high school education should be experiential and self-directed. Interacting with and learning about the larger community through participation in the Outreach Program were considered vital facets of the Evergreen experience that further shaped the high school community.

. . . Catch Fire

Barbara could pinpoint the event that had caused her to "catch fire." "The African American course was a turning point," she began rather thoughtfully. "When I took that course something clicked for me because I really loved it. There was a whole momentum in that. I was learning and it felt so good. I remember thinking, 'I want to do this. It's really important to me.' When you are in that state of mind, everything else kind of fits into place and you don't want it to end." Students often compared the experiences that they had had in the mainstream with those they were enjoying at Evergreen. All of the students to whom I spoke had their own story of "catching fire," of becoming self-motivated and self-directed learners. Each of these stories included references to the interesting and innovative approaches to teaching and learning of which they had been a part within the school.

Several students felt that by leaving the mainstream and coming to Evergreen they had been "freed from the textbook." Warren, a grade eleven student who was in his first semester at the school, said that he had been "bored" at his previous high school and was tired of being required to do what he referred to as "a lot of busy work." He liked his Native studies course and computer course where there were no textbooks. Ben claimed that the reason he had decided to come to Evergreen was because he had heard that teachers never asked students to "read and do questions on pages eight, nine and ten." He had heard and since experienced that this was a school where there was a lot of discussion, and where students had the freedom to set their own objectives for learning and demonstrate that learning in creative and individual ways. "This school really challenges your ego, mind, spirit, and perceptions, " Ben explained in an excited manner.

"At Evergreen the kids create the community," stated one parent as she commented on the impact of student individuality. "They don't conform to fit in." Without the restraints inherent in traditional school organization and curriculum delivery, Evergreen students became engaged in alternative ways of learning and achieving. The collective pursuits going on within the school contributed to the special feeling of Evergreen. "This is my fourth semester here and every semester the school changes," commented Barbara. "Our school symbol is the yin yang because life here is always flowing and evolving. When I leave this year, I will miss being part of those changes; I will miss the Evergreen spirit."

. . . Take Up The Larger Educational Agenda

When students streamed out of their classrooms at the end of each class, their conversations were often interspersed with serious discussions focused on current events and issues that had been raised through the discussion of a reading or through a presentation. "This is a school where you can actually come out of your class and keep talking," asserted Jas. "We will debate issues like sexism and racism. Teachers will philosophize about them and then leave us to come up with our own conclusion. Once we move through all of that, teachers will remind us that we are making interpretations under the modern paradigm and must learn to recognize our biases." Jas had several friends who attended other high schools within the public school system. Based on his conversations with these peers, he had come to the conclusion that, "In mainstream high schools they don't ever seem to teach you things that apply to the outside world. Here we examine and debate new ideas. Because of the way the world is changing right now," continued Jas, "traditional lifestyles are going to have to be modified. Innovation is the key word. I think that going to a high school like this prepares you for the changing world and times."

The school meeting on educational reform in which I had participated that first day at the school in November had shown me that these young people recognized and were prepared to take on the larger socio-political agenda of the day. Jason who had emerged as one of the leaders of the Students For Action On Educational Reform issues, commented, "It's not enough to be critical of the Government and what it does. Criticism is important, but criticism can't replace activism. Criticism is the first step of activism." Ben who was also involved in the newly formed educational reform committee shared a similar belief. "People really like controversy in this school. Right now in our society with all the changes that the Government is trying to make, we need people who will argue, who have passion, and who care." Ben, through the following use of metaphor, articulated what made Evergreen Community High School such a vital place for those who were part of the community as well as for those who were served by the school community. "In medieval times there was a fool. The fool always told the king through humor or a song what was wrong with society, or a problem that the people had. At this school we are not only concerned about ourselves as individuals. We are like a bunch of fools. We like to point out what is wrong and how we can make society better."

The October 27th Toronto Days Of Action Student Forums, Students For Action On Educational Reform, Students Against Violence Toward Women, and Students Against Toronto Megacity were all examples of student activism that occurred over the six months that I spent studying the school. Student involvement in these demonstrations clearly indicated the high commitment level of the Evergreen student body to the larger educational agenda. Student activism fueled by strong personal convictions and a passion for social justice was an integral part of the Evergreen experience. The young citizens of Evergreen Community High School were willing to become social and political activists who, like the courtly "fool," accepted the challenge and responsibility for "alerting the king when something was wrong."

Staff Members . . .
. . . Share A Set Of Core Beliefs

"Within our classes, we try and teach respect for ideas. Everyone has the right to speak and be heard," Arnold explained. "Part of our philosophy is to break down those barriers and boundaries of age, gender, and sexual orientation. Teachers and students are on equal footing. That's why we go by our first names," he continued. "We teachers have no cloak of authority to hide behind. To the students at Evergreen, I'm 'Arnold'." The students, parents, and staff members whom I interviewed over my time at Evergreen Community High School placed a high value on individualism. One student referred to Evergreen as "a school built on the practice of individuality." Students, parents, and staff members placed equally high value on the positive relationships among individuals; relationships were built on mutual respect, equality, and the recognition of diversity.

Underpinning the practice of individuality within the context of trusting relationships was the belief that the world was now, as it had always been, going through a period of significant and dramatic change. According to Tom who had been part of the school staff since the late 1970s, this was the belief upon which the school had been founded. It was the spirit of Evergreen. "The school grew out of the community thinking of the 1960s where people were looking for alternatives.

There was the belief that communities were collectives of people who supported one another in questioning the status quo and in the individual pursuit of understanding, making sense of the world," Tom explained. "In the 1970s there was a lot of enthusiasm that things were going to change in some dramatic way. It was the Age of Aquarius. There were a lot of people who put in a lot of energy because they believed that change in society would actually happen." Tom believed that the origin and history of the school contributed to the "sense of place" which, like a philosophical framework, allowed Evergreen staff to discuss, debate, and understand "real time" events and issues.

My first encounter with the "Evergreen spirit" occurred in October during my visit to the staff meeting. Through my interviews with staff, I learned that all of the teachers believed that the Wednesday staff meetings were significant events. "I think that part of the success of the school is those meetings," asserted Tom. "Everybody has a different style and approach and it's important to find out how people think at certain times and what their issues are." For Tom, the weekly staff meetings where administrative issues, concerns about students, and innovations in curriculum were discussed, were crucial for recognizing and maintaining diversity within community. For Tom, the weekly staff meetings provided the space and time for the affirmation of the core beliefs which fueled the spirit of Evergreen.

Arnold who had been a teacher at Evergreen for almost 20 years believed that this high school was an alternative for teachers as well as for students and parents. He believed that what brought individuals together in an alternative high school was a fundamental belief in the democratic process. "I think that you can put certain structures into place that enable things to happen, or at least create the possibility. I don't think that you can mandate community. I like to use the analogy of the ecosystem," he continued. " This kind of school is very energy intensive, where like an ecosystem, all parts co-evolve and self-regulate within the larger environment." Arnold believed that openness, mutual respect, and trust among staff members were crucial in encouraging diversity within community. He, like Tom, referred to the importance of the weekly staff meetings. "I think that because teachers tend to stay in the school for a long time, the teachers are very important in creating and sustaining the community spirit. Sometimes at staff meetings we have to make very hard decisions, very emotional decisions. There has to be a lot of trust that people are going to do their best."

Liz talked about the importance of articulating and affirming the common beliefs which she also felt underlay the diversity of the Evergreen experience. She reflected upon the 17 years that she had been a staff member. "We haven't always been able to address everything the way that everyone would like, but at our staff meetings we usually continue to discuss and debate until we all get to a working level of commonality. Commonality," she emphasized, "is not the same as dogmatism. It's just the starting point. We've always agreed that there should be a place for diversity, but at the same time diversity shouldn't mean fragmentation." Liz also spoke about the importance of the weekly staff meetings. "It sometimes becomes annoying to some people that we revisit the same issues over and over again at our staff meetings. But the truth is that those things that we keep coming back to, the Outreach Program and Field Trips for example, are important. We have to revisit all of these things because everyone's perception is different. We have to assure ourselves that we do in fact have commonality." As way of illustration, Liz referred to the school logo. "That's why I like the school symbol of the Yin and the Yang," she concluded. "The school, like the symbol, acts as an envelope inside which is this swirling mass of differences that are constantly moving."

Within this culture of openness characterized by a shared belief in the democratic process and the importance of community, there was room for diversity where teachers modeled and practiced individualism.

. . . As Individuals

"I had an artist paint me once with devilish precision," the young woman with the long dark hair stopped reading her poem and smiled shyly as I slid into the remaining empty chair in the circle. She was sharing an original composition with her peers within this Writer's Craft class. Sensing the young women's nervousness, the teacher approached the circle. "Isabella has written some incredible poetry," exclaimed Kevin. "Her poem, 'The Painting,' will be included in the next edition of Brook." With that, the young woman sitting beside me in the circle leaned over and whispered, "Kevin is a poet too. He's had his work published. He's the editor of Brook," she added, proud of her teacher's accomplishment. Encouraged by her teacher's warm words of praise, Isabella completed her reading of "The Painting."

"The teachers are individuals who have their own strengths and issues," stated one student who was in his third semester at the school. "You've probably heard students refer to their courses as a Gail, a Liz, an Arnold, a Marie, a Margaret, a

Kevin, or a Tom." Each staff member had carved out his or her own niche within the school community. Some of the repeated comments that showed student awareness and appreciation of their teachers' individuality and strengths included the following: "From Marie you learn how to really write an essay;" "Gail is passionate and very knowledgeable about all issues of oppression. She encourages us to question authority and question the power structure;" "Kevin is a poet. He takes time to write comments on all of our work. In Writer's Craft we all feel like writers;" "Arnold asks you questions and makes you think about social issues that no one is talking about yet. For example, we talk a lot about cyborgs and the ethics of technology;" "Liz gets us involved with environmental issues. She makes us think about the impact of science on society;" "Margaret has a passion for math and can teach mathophobs to love math. She can get everyone to pass math;" "Tom is the artist. He's quite subversive in the way that he makes us learn and we don't even know that we are learning."

My initial impressions of the classrooms that I had seen during that first visit to the school in October were reinforced through student comments and my own observations and interactions with staff members. The classrooms were metaphorical in the sense that they created a visual impression of each teacher's individuality. Gail and Marie shared the room with the couches, plants, and blue carpet. Arnold's was the room with the movie posters, computers, and figurine of Elvis. Kevin's room had the dioramas of the Shakespearean Tragedies and the cappuccino maker. Margaret's was the bright room with the large windows, science posters, and computers. Liz's was the room with the computers and incredible view of the CN Tower. And Tom's was the eclectic and playful "Le Chambre d'Art."

"We teachers are a pretty unruly bunch of individuals," smiled Arnold. "Most of us have strong beliefs, are confident in our knowledge, and have a passion for what we teach. I think that when the students see how passionate we are about what we are teaching, how much we really are caught up in ideas, that energy is in some way communicated to them. It's as if they catch fire." This group of teachers modeled their passion for learning and ideas. All seven teachers, for example, had more than one university degree. Five had Master's degrees in a wide range of disciplines within the sciences and the humanities. Arnold had just completed his Doctorate in Media and Cultural Studies at the Ontario Institute Of Studies In Education, University of Toronto. During the interviews with the seven teachers, I learned that all were "passionate about their teaching," and most had "always wanted to teach." Several made the claim that they had been "born to be a teacher." Even given all of the years of experience and the accumulation of university degrees, there was still a sense of that original passion that had drawn these individuals into teaching and learning with young people. "It's a dialectic," explained Arnold. "The students see the teachers doing different things, so then they are prepared to do different things. We co-evolve. In all my years at Evergreen I have never been bored." "My students are teaching me all the time," emphasized Gail. "Evergreen students are exceptional human beings." With that remark, Gail too claimed that she was "never bored."

Students and parents referred to "the teachers" collectively when they wished to praise what the staff did within the school. Students and parents to whom I spoke credited the staff for the school's strong academic reputation and the overall success of the school. It was the feeling of the students and parents that the teachers were the "designers" of the Evergreen experience.

. . . As Designers of the Evergreen Experience

"Who needs a ticket for the streetcar and subway?" asked Kevin. "The theater is at Bay and Cumberland," continued Kevin, speaking louder in an effort to be heard over the youthful voices. "Does everyone know where we are going? You can get off at Bay, or you can walk over from Yonge. We have enough time before the show starts." In the excitement surrounding this field trip to see the newly released movie version of "Romeo and Juliet," several of the students from the Shakespeare class left before hearing the final set of instructions. "If "Star Trek" is sold out, we'll meet you at "Romeo and Juliet," Arnold shouted across the office full of enthusiastic young people who were all talking at once. As the double doors closed behind Arnold and the students from his computer class, the banner of the Planet Earth swayed in the afterdraft, a gentle reminder that this inner city alternative school was part of a larger world.

Implicit in the original vision of Evergreen Community High School was the belief that the school was part of a larger community. "Community in the school name means two things," explained Arnold. We try to build community by involving people and making sure that the various constituent groups are empowered through shared decision making. But community also refers to the way in which we have traditionally included field trips as alternatives in our curriculum," he continued.

"Community has a pedagogical sense. The curriculum is not just textbooks and subjects in the classroom; it also involves using community resources in an innovative way. Our students learn by visiting an art gallery, by going to a play, or by viewing a film," he went on. "We have an annual trip to Buffalo as well. Some years almost the whole school goes. Students get to see another city, in another country. They learn about cultural and social differences and really learn a lot about themselves."

"Star Trek" was sold out. That afternoon over one half of the Evergreen student body made its way downtown to join the crowd that had assembled for the matinee showing of "Romeo and Juliet." After the show while the other spectators exited the theater to make their way home, the Evergreen students gathered in small groups of five or six to discuss and analyze the film that they had just seen. The conversations and debates carried the same intensity as those that I had heard in the classrooms and student lounge of the school. These students evidently understood the intent and purpose of field trips within the school curriculum. They demonstrated in convincing fashion what Arnold had claimed; "When you live in a large urban center as we do, the city becomes a textbook for learning."

One of the most poignant stories of the impact of teacher creativity upon student learning was recounted by Shauna. "When I first arrived at Evergreen, I had to unlearn what I thought education was," explained Shauna, a former student who had returned to the school for a visit. "Every day at Evergreen was like some grand event." After 15 years, Shauna still remembered the course that she had taken with Tom. "Tom was very magical and mysterious. He would dress up in different costumes for classes depending on what we were studying in history. He would arrive in capes and hats and would play out scenes. He would act out history and we would learn without knowing that we were learning."

There were no laminated lesson plans, no textbooks, no sameness about the day-to-day experiences of teaching and learning at Evergreen. "Teaching is extraordinarily ephemeral," Liz explained. "Teachers here really believe that students must have a say in what they are learning. We can provide an outline for that learning, but I find that a year from now, what I have worked on a particular day with a particular group will have disappeared or changed because it is specific to that time and those people." As Liz tried to summarize her own 17 years of experience within this alternative high school, she concluded, "That's one of the remarkable things about Evergreen. It is in constant flux and that encourages we teachers to be very creative, to be artists."

. . . As Mentors

"I think that through their creativity and artistic approach the teachers are able to turn most of the students around," remarked Marion. "When they get here, students are often turned off and disillusioned from what they have experienced in the regular school system." Marion's own son had been a student at Evergreen several years before the school had joined with the Toronto Board of Education. When it was still a private school, she had been a parent volunteer within the school and had become the office administrator once the school became part of the Toronto Board. Over the 19 years that Marion had spent in the school office, she had observed different people and different events unfold. She too claimed that she had never been "bored" because the school was constantly changing.

There had been a great number of staff changes during that time, but even with the changes there were some constants. Marion commented on the special relationships between teachers and students that she had observed develop around the creative approaches to teaching and learning. "The teachers are very knowledgeable and dedicated to making school interesting for their students. The students admire and respect their teachers; they look to them as mentors in their learning." As the students recounted their own stories of "catching fire," they would refer to specific teachers and use the word "mentor" in acknowledging the role that these special adults in their lives had played.

Several students mentioned the mentoring relationship which they shared with Margaret, the teacher who had taught mathematics and the sciences at Evergreen over the past eight years. Typically, Evergreen attracted students who were strong in the arts and humanities. Mathematics was a required course for high school graduation, but it was a subject with which many students struggled. "I had a dreadful high school experience," Margaret began rather thoughtfully. "I believe that I get along with students who have been unsuccessful at math or school, because I am able to identify with these students." As Margaret spoke about her experiences teaching mathematics and the sciences, it was evident that she had given considerable thought to how best to motivate students to learn. "In my mind, institutional authority is inherent in the job of a teacher," she began. "Although institutional authority is my job and it's incumbent upon me to exercise that authority, it can only be exercised if the students agree. If students accept my authority, it's because we are able to relate in ways that are personal, sincere, and meaningful. For me, the most fundamental aspect of teaching is being able to legitimize my authority through my relationships with the students," she concluded. "If Margaret can get me through mathematics, she can get anyone through," claimed one student. "She makes it all seem so simple." "Hers was the first class where I wasn't afraid of math" claimed another student. "I could actually do it."

Teachers provided mentorship for one another as well. A portion of the weekly staff meeting time was devoted to the discussion and exchange of ideas about teaching that were not subject specific. "I think it's valuable when people talk about what they are thinking and doing in their classes," explained Tom. "Someone will mention an idea, and then another person will pick it up and often everyone gets involved," shared Liz. Teachers supported one another in understanding issues and events going on within the school. They also engaged in the discussions which supported the interdisciplinary innovations in curriculum that were constantly being initiated.

. . . As Administrators

"For the first two or three weeks in the job, nobody called me," Doug stated as he explained what it was like being the principal of six alternative high schools. "I went out to the schools, but kept wondering, 'What am I doing here?' Once people got to know me, the calls started coming and before long I was inundated," he continued. "It was quite difficult for me because I had spent my whole career in collegiates and regular schools. I had a fine sense of how those schools functioned, but it was very different in the alternative schools." Reflecting on his seven years as principal of the Toronto Board of Education's six alternative high schools, Doug concluded, "It's been a good experience. It's certainly been a real learning experience for me."

Doug's first introduction to the alternative secondary schools in Toronto had occurred several years before when his own daughter had left the mainstream to attend Evergreen. "That was an education for me. I had certain preconceptions about alternative schools not being as rigorous as collegiates. I didn't understand, as most who haven't been involved in alternative schools don't understand, that there is great diversity and challenge within these schools. That's what attracts teachers, students and parents." Doug's own daughter flourished at Evergreen. "She changed immediately. Attending Evergreen changed her whole outlook on life. She had a much more positive attitude toward education." Doug's daughter graduated from Evergreen, completed a university degree, and was currently teaching English in Korea.

As principal, Doug oversaw the operation of the schools and responded to requests and concerns expressed by staff, students, and parents. He was, however, outside of the process and believed his role was to intervene only when necessary. "I believe ultimately in the process. I believe in democracy at the ground level. I believe that sometimes as principal I have to intervene to make sure that the process is simpler and clearer than it might otherwise be, but this kind of intervention is not often called for." Doug felt that through the consensual decision making model that was in place in each of the schools, issues and concerns were usually worked out. He emphasized that personal relationships were crucial to sustain this inclusive process which inevitably took a great deal of time and human energy.

The two Teacher Coordinators within the school were selected by colleagues and were rotated every two years. "It's not an easy role because they have no special status, no special salary," remarked Doug. "They have to have really good interpersonal skills. It's a very challenging role." Doug praised the individual staff members who had assumed the extra administrative responsibilities assumed by the Coordinators. As six out of seven of the staff members had been Coordinators, there was tremendous empathy and support for those who took on the position. All staff considered the Coordinatorship a "duty." All staff members "took their turn." Tom who had been a Coordinator on more than one occasion commented that it was a role that sometimes separated teachers from their colleagues. He enjoyed the challenge of working with "information and people" as he put it, but felt that the demands of the position inevitably took away from the energy he had to devote to his teaching. This concern was echoed by others. Several staff members commented that the Coordinators had to walk the fine and delicate line between being an "administrator" and being a "teacher." At Evergreen where everyone "practiced individuality," even the hint of a growing hierarchical power structure was cause to "question authority" and take up the "struggle."

. . . Question Authority And Struggle

"We are a group that likes controversy and learns from the debate," commented one staff member. "I like disagreement," explained another. "It's not that

I dislike harmony, but I am not oriented toward harmony for the sake of harmony. Sometimes disagreement is a really good opportunity for learning. It's the same academically. In a Socratic situation you constantly ask questions. You have to validate why you are saying what you are saying. Disagreement can be a very productive thing. It can give people cause for thought." These comments reminded me of the "Evergreen Spirit" that I had first observed during that staff meeting in October. At that first staff meeting, issues that could not be resolved were tabled, allowing individuals time to think and reconsider their arguments and their beliefs before the next encounter. There was no voting, no "winners" or "losers." With the unfolding of each new topic at that staff meeting, I had become aware of a certain cadence to the discussion as the engaged voices of staff members moved from cacophony to euphony. I had observed a similar progression within staff and student discussions on several subsequent occasions. I had observed this group of staff members and their students question and struggle over a wide array of educational issues over the six months that I spent studying the school.

"Without Struggle There Can Be No Progress." I had read these words of Frederick Douglass on one of the posters in the classroom with the blue carpet that first day. "Struggle" was the aspect of the Evergreen spirit that resonated within classrooms, the student lounge, and the staff meetings. It was the way that this highly diverse group of individuals engaged in sense-making. Like the Yin and the Yang, the constant struggle between polarities was not intended to favor "black" or "white." Occasionally, however, the constantly swirling mass of differences gave rise to tensions within Evergreen.

Tensions Within Evergreen

Outsiders

"This is a hard place in which to be new," claimed one student now in his third semester at Evergreen. He was alluding to the difficulties that new students sometimes encountered as they adjusted to the expectations as outlined by the THREE RULES and the Codes of Behavior. Marie taught many of the new students to the school in her grade 11 classes. "Students who are new to Evergreen are often angry and scarred from their previous school experiences. They are restless and searching," she explained. They can only survive here for so long. If they don't eventually get down to work and get some credits, they are going to be asked to leave." The "Students on Probation" about which I had heard that first day during the staff meeting were those students who had not yet been able to set their own boundaries for behavior, and their own agendas for learning and achievement. Students who were on probation for attendance, or poor academic performance, or substance abuse were those who had not yet "caught fire." After two semesters at Evergreen, students on probation were referred to CEASA where the recommendation for a CEASED TO PROFIT letter was often made. The CEASED TO PROFIT letter required that the student in question withdraw from the school at the end of that semester.

The whole process leading up to the CEASED TO PROFIT letter on occasion created tension within the community. One student who was in his third semester at Evergreen admitted that during his first semester in the school he had not "followed any of the rules" and was placed on probation on all three counts. He had begun to work harder at school after that and was now doing well. He was upset, however, because two of his friends had received CEASED TO PROFIT letters and would not be allowed to return to the school after the end of the semester. Upset with the school and the process, this student shared his disappointment. "This school is supposed to be about second chances. It's about chances that you need to succeed in the school. Different people take different amounts of time. I had been to three other high schools before coming here. Evergreen gave me a second chance at school. I care about school and am sincere about my school work now." He did not understand the process leading up to his friends' CEASED TO PROFIT letter and imminent withdrawal. "How can they say, 'We are a school about second chances' and then kick people out who have nowhere else to go?" These feelings of alienation were echoed by other students who found it difficult to accept that even within an alternative school there were still those unable to function, those who remained outsiders.

When The Formal And Informal Clash

"They are a community. For an outsider, there is a period of adjustment," Doug explained. "Most teachers who come to an alternative school want to be there and make the adjustment. Others never do." For Doug, staff concerns were the most difficult issues with which he had to deal as principal of six alternative high schools. "The personnel thing is the most difficult part of the job as far as I am concerned, because where in a regular school you function by clearly defined rules, in alternative schools you don't," he continued. "Alternative schools have a very different culture. They do not go by the same rules as regular schools and everyone must accept that.

If they don't, then it can become very disruptive. It is very divisive when disaffected staff call on the rules to solve a problem; it really is a kind of opting out." In the absence of a formal hierarchical structure within the school, it was necessary for staff and students to agree upon the informal processes to be used for problem identification and problem solving. Doug concluded that "the processes often needed clarification."

"Many staff members talk about the importance of trust, yet the same people will talk about the rules of the profession. There is an effort to be professional, but there is an effort to be family. Those two models are often inconsistent," one staff member stated as she pointed out what she perceived to be some apparent contradictions between the formal and informal rules in operation within the school. She felt that sometimes the informal cultural rules of the school community determined how staff perceived and reacted to situations. At other times however, she felt that staff reverted to Board policy, or Teacher Federation rules in order to argue and resolve differences. Another staff member who had been at the school for a long period of time referred to instances in the past where staff had "not made the adjustment to alternative schools," and where a fracture within the community had resulted. These staff members also believed that the informal processes and structures within the school needed clarification.

With the growing emphasis on student achievement and the announcement of standardized testing, there was a sense among staff that their innovative approaches to curriculum and instruction might in the future be restricted. One staff member was perturbed by a recent discussion of "student retention and credit granting ratios" at a staff meeting. She feared that with the changes implicit in the Ontario Government's secondary education reform document, their small alternative community high school would soon be compared and judged with the larger collegiates.

Evergreen Community High School, like most alternative schools, was characterized by a decentralized administrative structure and an innovative curriculum. Like in all alternative schools, the parents, students, and staff, experienced tension when the formal and informal processes within the school organization clashed.

Changes At Evergreen

"Community was stronger and more continuous a few years ago, " one staff member explained. "With changes in public attitudes and School Board policy, staff and students no longer meet as a community outside of the school." Several staff and students viewed this division between the academic and social aspects of the relationships within the school community as a fundamental change.

"Evergreen has become more popular in the last few years. There is a growing tendency to refuse border-line students," observed one concerned staff member. Another also expressed some concern over the apparent change occurring in the student population. "Evergreen was written up in *Toronto Life* as one of the 'cream' secondary schools in the city," he began. "That kind of publicity is good, but it also attracts a certain group of parents who may not have been interested in an alternative school before that." To further illustrate his concern, this staff member concluded, "I would not like to see us become more elitist to the point that we try to filter out some students. I believe that one of the strengths of this school is its diversity. We have really good academic students, but we have other students who probably wouldn't survive in the mainstream school. They can manage to finish high school here and that's part of our success." Other staff members felt that in these changing times of increased accountability in schools, it was good that the school was attracting strong academic students who would stay and complete their high school. Staff members and students expressed the concern over what they perceived to be the changing student population within the school community.

Several staff members and students also expressed a concern over the growing student population of the school and felt that it was critical to maintain the "small size" in order to preserve the unique community feeling within the school. Andy, the student teacher who had also been a student several years before when the school was smaller, quoted Aristotle: "An ideal democracy is built on consensual decision making and comprises 100 or fewer citizens." He perceived a change in the Evergreen feeling and spirit with the increased size of the school community. The feeling that the school had become more impersonal with its growth in size was shared by others whom I interviewed. One staff member felt it was time to not rest on laurels, but to revisit the mandate and philosophy of the school and affirm "commonality" while recognizing diversity.

Like all other schools during this time of educational reform, Evergreen was facing challenges and change. During that first day at Evergreen where I had seen the teachers and students struggle with the Ontario Government's document on secondary school reform, I had wondered how they measured "progress"? If struggle was the way that this highly diverse group of individuals engaged in sense-making, then "progress," it seemed to me, was the manner in which they moved toward understanding and an articulation of a common purpose for schooling. The "sense of place" provided by the history and traditions of Evergreen was the strength of this school community. The "spirit" of the struggle underlay the philosophical framework within which "real time" issues and challenges would be discussed and acted upon.

Measuring Success

Although Evergreen Community High School had been included in the *Exemplary Schools Study* and had been written about in magazines including *Toronto Life*, when students, staff, and parents talked about "success," they emphasized the diverse accomplishments of individuals within the school community.

Since arriving at Evergreen, Alicia claimed that she had had to unlearn what she thought education was. In her previous high school, there had been what she called a product-oriented mentality. "In our modern culture people are removed from their bodies and live inside their heads," she explained. "At Evergreen, learning is not about textbooks; it's about personal growth and learning how to combine the intellectual and the emotional. A good example to show you what I mean," she continued, "would be how through my drama class I have learned to stand and look out into the audience. As I perform, I learn from the audience and they learn from me. At Evergreen, we are all performers as we are all each other's audience." With one final illustration, Alicia concluded, "Learning is not a linear progression, but rather some kind of circular movement like the Yin Yang on the school symbol." When people talked about "success" at Evergreen, they emphasized the development of the individual within the context of supportive relationships.

Shannon's memories of the large collegiate were not pleasant. As soon as she began to compare those experiences with what she was living at Evergreen, her tone changed. "I am happier here than I have been in any other school," she claimed. "I feel safe here. There is a lot of respect and a lot of trust. Put downs and verbal abuse are not acceptable. Everyone has a place. Everyone feels special." When people talked about "success" at Evergreen, they emphasized feeling special and the feeling of belonging.

"Aren't our students wonderful?" glowed one staff member. "Our students are bright, caring individuals," commented another. At the graduation in October, 22 of the 40 graduates had been awarded Ontario Scholarships for achieving an average of 80 percent or higher. At Evergreen the passion for learning could be measured by the achievement of individual students who had "caught fire." When people talked about "success" at Evergreen, they emphasized individual student achievement.

Many students and parents attributed the success of the school and the students to the individual strengths of the teachers. Gail who had previously worked within a large department of teachers at one of the collegiates in the city enjoyed the freedom to innovate that this alternative school environment provided. "At Evergreen we are free to create curricula. Without department heads to oversee what we are doing in our classrooms, we must trust all of our colleagues to create and deliver curricula. We trust that they are knowledgeable, creative, honorable and dedicated. That's what I love about teaching at Evergreen," she concluded. "The Freedom and the Trust." When people talked about "success" at Evergreen, they emphasized the dedication, creativity, and academic strengths of the teachers.

One of the most poignant stories of "success" was recounted by a former student. "I was 16 when I decided to come to Evergreen," began Shauna, a 31 year old graduate of Evergreen. "At the time, I had dropped out of my high school in Ottawa and had come to Toronto quite frustrated with school. Even though I was accepted here, I started the year with very little enthusiasm about having to go to school. At the end of that year I graduated and left thinking that school was great. I left feeling that I wanted always to go to school." As testimony to the impact that the Evergreen experience had had upon her life, Shauna outlined her scholastic accomplishments. Since graduating from high school, she had received an undergraduate degree and two master's degrees. For the last five years she had been a teacher in alternative schools in inner city New York and Toronto. "I have never been able to regain that Evergreen feeling anywhere else," sighed Shauna. As Shauna spoke, it was clear why in retrospect she referred to her Evergreen high school experience as "one of the pivotal points in my development as a human being."

When people talked about "success" at Evergreen, they emphasized the practice of individuality within the context of trusting and supportive relationships. They talked about and celebrated diversity within the school community.

Celebrating Community

The Performance

Three days before the commencement of the Christmas break, over one hundred people crowded into the school in order to participate in one of the famous Evergreen Coffee Houses. In mid-November, the following message had appeared in brightly colored chalk on the blackboard in the main foyer: "Winter Cafe and Carnival Night of Song, Poetry, and Music--We Need You." Over the course of the next few weeks, excitement and anticipation surrounded the planning and preparation leading up to this evening's event. Allen, the young man acting as MC, stepped up to the microphone to welcome people and begin the show.

When Isabella heard her name, the young woman made her way to the small open space at the front of the crowded student lounge that for tonight had been transformed into a Coffee House. As she approached the stool which was positioned in the spotlight, she raised her hand and brushed her long dark hair away from her face. Shyly, she leaned into the microphone and announced, "My poem is called 'The Painting.'" Isabella took another deep breath that showed her nervousness and served to cue the audience who then became silent. She continued:

> "I had an artist paint me once
> with devilish precision he burnt holes in the canvas
> for eyes, a mouth and ears
> for who ever pays attention to what is seen said or heard?
> My nose was a rose hiding its thorns of interest
> my hair a pelt still dripping with blood,
> stripping away vanity.
> As for my body
> it hurt most of all, staking out the middle of the canvas
> he used forks to shred and knives to cut
> a confused battleground
> with me on either side
> revenge and futility seized the air
> and not a single survivor could be found.
> The man was an artist of the soul,
> he displayed it on my skin.
> The pain could not have been greater
> if he'd painted my outside within."

Isabella delivered the last four lines of her poem with such intensity that the audience, caught up in the mood, sat quietly and did not immediately respond. Unable to contain his excitement, the MC interrupted the silence with some words of praise for the poet. Pleased with her reading and the warm reaction, Isabella took a moment to look beyond the spotlight into the audience. A few weeks before, she had been hesitant to share her work with others in the Writer's Craft class, but tonight was different. Tonight, she was not a student; she was a "performer." As Isabella waited for the applause to subside, she stood and watched the collection of individuals who shared in the celebration of her achievement, her "painting."

When Isabella took her seat, two young men stepped into the spotlight. After assuring that their guitars were in tune, they sang two original compositions. When the musicians finished, another poet, then three more musicians took their turns on stage. Just before the intermission, Tom and Arnold delighted the audience with their post-modern rendition of a familiar carol that was all but unrecognizable once the reverb and cosmic sound effects had been added. As if to emphasize the ironic theme of their performance, both teachers had hot-wired their specially created vests to ensure that they could flash the lights and colors of the Christmas season throughout their presentation. With each successive act, those within the crowded lounge became progressively more engaged in the spirit of the Coffee House as if they too had become "participants" in the performance.

The final presentation of the evening, "The Cyber Fashion Show," featured a fantastical array of costumes. One group of students had designed a shimmery gown covered with corn kernels and corn husks. Another group had carved an imaginary outfit from two cardboard boxes. Perhaps the most provocative creation was the "Cyber Mother and Child." The creators of this outfit had sculpted a womb from an old computer monitor which they had then somehow incorporated into the front panel of a cotton housedress. Inside the plastic womb was a baby doll whose eyes had been wired in such a way that they glowed. The young woman who modeled the creation was thoroughly caught up in her role and smiled proudly as she paraded around the room displaying the "cyber fetus." At the end of the show, spectators jumped to their feet to applaud the artists and performers one final time.

As people filed out of the lounge and gathered in the main foyer to take part in the aftermath of laughter, conversation, and discussion, there was a resurgence of the special feeling that permeated this old school building and seemed ever-present and ever-changing. Although there had been other Coffee Houses, featuring other poets, other musicians, and other comics, in the minds of the parents, students, staff, and community members who had participated in this evening's event, there had been none more successful. Community at Evergreen was an elusive ideal that brought people together to share and celebrate the accomplishments of individuals. The performances tonight, as those that had occurred during previous Coffee Houses, reflected the magical and ephemeral spirit that was Evergreen.

CHAPTER 7

EVERGREEN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL CASE STUDY COMPANION

This chapter includes interpretations of the leadership phenomenon at Evergreen Community High School. These interpretations are based on themes that emerged from the analysis of the case study report found in the preceding chapter. This analysis was conducted within the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. The development of the conceptual framework, as was previously stated, was influenced by Lambert et al.'s definition of leadership (1995, p. 29).

Embedded within the following interpretations are illustrations from the Evergreen case study report as well as references to the research literature. These illustrations and references have been incorporated into the following in order to provide for reader interpretation.

This chapter has been organized under the headings: "The Context and Processes of Leadership;" "The 'Sense of Place' at Evergreen";" "The 'Spirit' of Evergreen;" "Tensions Underlying the Context and Processes of Leadership;" and "Interpretations of Leadership at Evergreen." These headings correspond to the overarching themes which emerged from preliminary analysis of the two case study reports.

A summary of interpretations presented in this chapter is included in Chapter 8 in the section titled, "Leadership in Evergreen Community High School."

The Context and Processes of Leadership

Over the months spent studying Evergreen Community High School, I was struck by the multiple direct and indirect references people made to the "sense of place" and the "spirit" of the school. I came to recognize that "sense of place" was the metaphor most frequently used to connote the context wherein school members participated in community and, as one student stated, "practiced their individuality." The complex network of relationships based on respect for differences and a common belief in democratic principles and processes created the environment of trust in which school members endeavored to understand and recreate their social world while expressing their individuality. It was the context in which school members participated in and experienced leadership. In the following discussion of the context of leadership, the origin and history of the school, the nature of community and relationships within the school, and the unique curriculum are presented as critical attributes of the "sense of place" at Evergreen. The on-going questioning, discussion, and conversation focused on making sense of the world and life's experiences embodied what many respondents called the "spirit" of Evergreen. These contextualized activities, the "spirit" of the school, are presented in the following discussion as the processes of leadership.

The "Sense of Place" at Evergreen

During my first visit to Evergreen, I became aware of the unique "sense of place" within this alternative high school of 120 students and 7 teachers. In the case report, I wrote about the diversity that I had observed in each of the classrooms as well as the "special feeling that permeated this old school building" constructed in the late 1800s and situated in what was now an inner city Toronto neighborhood. Observational data collected during the first visit to the school prompted me to record the following description in my journal. "Weathered wood, polished linoleum, well-used books, paper, chalk dust, couches, computers, flowering plants, and above all the talk, arguing, and laughter create a powerful sense of place." Over the time spent studying the school, it became evident to me that the members of the school community attributed great importance to this enduring yet ephemeral "sense of place." Although descriptions varied, all were rooted in a feeling of connectedness and belonging to a school with a history of community involvement and a tradition of supporting individual expression and non-conformity.

The discussion of the "sense of place" at Evergreen Community High School has been organized under the following headings which refer to what I have called the critical attributes of the context of leadership:

1. The Communitarian History and Legacy
2. The Mix of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.
3. From Manifesto of Principles to Moral Authority.
4. Trusting Relationships Built on Equality and Mutual Respect
5. Freedom and Individual Expression.
6. A School Culture of Permanence and Continuous Change.

The Communitarian History and Legacy. Robert Bellah (1985) defined "real communities as communities of memory which are constituted by their past" (p. 153). In telling the stories of a community, he contended, members develop coherence and identity. Tom, Arnold, and Liz were the staff members to whom others would defer when I asked specific questions about the origin and history of Evergreen Community High School. Through the interviews and conversations with these three long time staff members, it became clear to me that the socio-political ideas underpinning the creation of Evergreen were inextricably interwoven into the culture and traditions to which school members referred and which were reflected in the philosophy statement included in the current school handbook:

> Evergreen is a school based upon community involvement and strong support for individual expression. There is tolerance and latitude for this expression within the written rules of the school and within the behavioral standards which reflect the ethos of the community. The Evergreen community comprises parents, students, and staff working together to create a unique learning environment.

Although parents, students, and newer staff members whom I interviewed all spoke of the philosophy and traditions of the school in a similar manner, these school members did not often know the precise details of the origin and history of the school. Newer members of the school community understood and subscribed to the philosophy and took pride in the traditions, but had confidence in and respect for the long time staff members who knew the history, and who together represented for many the collective memory of the school community. For the students, who on average spent three years or less at the school, the presence of the long time staff members and the stories of Evergreen's past supported their feelings of belonging and their understanding of the pervasive "sense of place." Sergiovanni (1995a) stressed the importance of history and collective memory within schools that are communities:

> Community understandings have enduring qualities. These understandings are taught to new members, celebrated in customs and rituals, and embodied as standards that govern life in community. Furthermore, they are resilient enough to survive the passage of members through the community over time. . . . Being part of a community of memory sustains us when times are tough, connects us when we are not physically present, and provides us with a history for creating sense and meaning. (p. 69)

Similarly, Lambert et al. (1996) stressed the importance of school members becoming involved in the process of "co-creation of collective identity" (p. 44). Through the sharing of stories and community understandings, these authors claimed, a school community becomes self-referencing, self-sustaining, resilient, and ultimately self-organizing (p. 43). At Evergreen, the "community understandings" had endured and were embodied in the "standards that governed life." Arnold alluded to the resilience of the "community understandings" at Evergreen when he referred to the two connotations of the word "community" in the school name. The first, he explained, referred to the development and evolution of the school's governance structures; the second to the way in which the unique school program had, over time, consistently provided connections between the school and the larger urban community.

Evergreen had begun as a private high school in the late 1960s, conceived and initiated by a group of individuals who were in Tom's words, "counter-culture," and looking for alternatives. Having taught at Evergreen when it was still a private school in the 1970s and having had a sibling attend Evergreen prior to teaching there, Tom's knowledge of the school community was based on a wide variety of experiences which extended over a period of more than twenty years. "It was the Age of Aquarius," explained Tom as he described this group of people whose notions of community were, in his mind, similar to those prevalent during the 1960s and 1970s (Quandt, 1970). According to Tom, this group of communitarian minded individuals were sometimes called "hippies" because of their belief that the world was undergoing significant social change, and their belief that a community modeled on democratic principles was the organizational form that best provided for individual and collective participation in those changes. Morgan (1997), in presenting different metaphors as lenses through which organization could be examined, argued that organizations could be viewed as governments, where politics and politicking are "essential aspects of organizational life and not necessarily an optional and dysfunctional extra" (p. 155). Referring to Aristotle, Morgan explained how "politics" in its original sense comprised the processes through which non-coercive forms of social order could be created:

> In its original meaning the idea of politics stems from the view that, where interests are divergent, society should provide a means of allowing individuals to reconcile their differences through consultation and negotiation. For example, in ancient Greece, Aristotle advocated politics as a means of reconciling the need for unity in the Greek polis (city-state) with the fact that the polis was an aggregate of many members. Politics for him provided a means of creating order out of diversity while avoiding forms of totalitarian rule. (p. 154)

The founders of Evergreen had previously established a successful food cooperative in this inner city Toronto neighborhood which, by adopting democratic political processes, allowed the collective to "create order out of diversity" and reconcile the need for unity while avoiding the creation of hierarchical power structures. With the creation of Evergreen as a community high school, this group of individuals established another institution through which they extended their belief in direct democracy:

> Direct democracy: the system where everyone has an equal right to rule and is involved in all decision making, as in many communal organizations such as cooperatives and kibbutzim. It encourages self-organization as a key mode of organizing. (p. 157)

The private high school had fewer than 75 students in its early years and all parents, staff, students, and community members attended school meetings where they made decisions about school curricula and the daily operation of the school. A consensual decision making model based on the belief that each school member had "equal right to rule" underlay the self-organizing character of the original private high school. Tom could recall specific school meetings which continued for as many hours as required until all voices and needs were considered and consensus had been reached. He could also remember debates and discussions of ideas being carried beyond the school into the social gatherings of staff, students, and parents outside of the school setting. The word "community" in the original school name, claimed Arnold, referred to the manner in which Evergreen students, parents, and staff members became "involved and empowered through shared decision making." Through my interviews and observations, it became evident that the current school governance model based on democratic beliefs and consensual decision making reflected the thinking and spirit of the founders of the school. The school governance structures were part of the communitarian legacy of Evergreen.

Merz and Furman (1997) and others who have researched and theorized about community (Elshtain, 1995; Etzioni, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995) have argued that high schools are important intermediate organizations as they provide the bridge between the family and society by preparing youth for individual and civic pursuits (Merz & Furman, 1997, p. 8). The founders of Evergreen school, according to Tom, were committed to creating an educational environment in which their adolescent children could mediate the goals and values of family and the immediate community with those of the larger society. Arnold made a similar claim when he stated that implicit in the original vision of Evergreen school was the belief "that the school was part of a larger urban community" which, like a constantly changing textbook, provided another context for individual and collective pursuits. Arnold also explained that this belief had been sustained over time through the unique school program which included a wide variety of field trips as well as the Outreach Program. Both of these curricular components had been part of the original Evergreen concept and required that students become involved in alternative ways of learning and public service.

Etzioni (1993), heralded as the founder of the modern communitarian movement, presented a compelling argument for making community programs and public service requirements for high school graduation. Etzioni contended that by involving young people in meaningful civic activities, the rampant segmentation occurring within modern society could be curbed. As Arnold explained the pedagogical connotation of the word "community" in the school name, he emphasized the importance of the field trips and the Outreach Program. Throughout the history of the school, these programs had consistently been supported by teachers, students, and parents who believed that such programming formed "bridges" between the school and the larger community. Evergreen field trips and the Outreach Program were integral facets of the communitarian legacy.

The communitarian history and legacy of the school gave rise to the "community understandings" (Sergiovanni, 1995a, p. 69) underpinning the pervasive "sense of place" at Evergreen. Like a philosophical framework, these understandings provided a context in which students, staff, and parents participated in the governance of the school and became involved in the larger community of which the school was a part. These understandings provided a context in which school members became self-referencing and self-organizing as they struggled to make sense of their diverse experiences within community. The community understandings comprised a critical attribute of the context in which school members adapted a "spirit" of leadership reminiscent of that exhibited by the founders of Evergreen.

The Mix of Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft. Tonnies, a German sociologist who lived and wrote during the period of rapid industrialization and urbanization of the late 1800s, established a typology in order to describe the changing patterns of human relationships and organization which he observed occurring within his society. Though somewhat dated, his theory has been mentioned increasingly in the education literature and several of his constructs have been used to analyze modern community problems (Merz & Furman, 1997, p. 13). Tonnies' theory provides a useful framework for the following discussion of the complex and paradoxical nature of community within Evergreen alternative high school.

Central to Tonnies' (1887/1957) theory of community is the claim that social relationships can be placed on a continuum according to the degree to which individuals are guided by "natural will" or "rational will" as they form collectives. This continuum is bound on one end by Gemeinschaft, often translated as "community," and on the other by Gesellschaft, often translated as "society." Within Tonnies' theoretical framework, individuals within collectives that are oriented toward Gemeinschaft are compelled by "natural will;" the commitment to the collective is naturally occurring, not voluntary or chosen. Gemeinschaft, according to Tonnies' theory, exists in three forms: community of kinship, of place, and of mind. Sergiovanni (1995a) drew from Tonnies' theory of community to explain the Gemeinschaft quality of schools that he had found to be community-like:

> Community by kinship characterizes the special kinds of relationships among people that create a unity that is similar to that found in families and other closely knit collections of people. Community of place characterizes sharing a common habitat or locale. This type of sharing with others for sustained periods of time creates a special identity and a shared sense of belonging that connects people together in special ways. Community of mind emerges from the binding of people to common goals, shared values, and shared conceptions of being and doing. Together, the three forms represent webs of meaning that tie people together by creating a special sense of belonging and a strong common identity. (p. 69)

Based on the assumption that "community of mind" was the most important aspect of Gemeinschaft, Sergiovanni (1994a) defined communities as "collections of individuals who are bonded together by natural will, and who are together binded to a set of shared ideas and ideals" (p. xvi). The discussion of the communitarian history and legacy of Evergreen school in the preceding section emphasized the Gemeinschaft and, using Sergiovanni's definition, the presence of community at Evergreen. The original private school had been conceived and created by a collective of individuals who shared a "community of kinship, place and mind." At school, the adolescent children of the community learned in an environment which was a natural extension of their homes and families, a Gemeinschaft. Tonnies' (1887/1957) idea of Gemeinschaft and Sergiovanni's (1994) definition of community are together useful constructs for probing the "sense of place" within the school, but by themselves do not provide an adequate framework for understanding the context of leadership at

Evergreen. There were also aspects of the current school community that were Gesellschaft in nature.

Over the time spent studying the complex relationships and social interactions among school members, I became progressively aware of the Gesellschaft characteristics of Evergreen Community High School. Within Tonnies' theoretical framework, Gesellschaft describes collectives where individuals are compelled by "rational will;" the decision to become part of the collective is voluntary and based on choice. Merz and Furman (1997) elaborated on Tonnies' idea of Gesellschaft:

> These relationships are chosen by the individuals strategically to accomplish some end, or reciprocity, . . . In many ways, the modern bureaucracy, with its rules, layers of authority, and institutionalized purpose, is the quintessential Gesellschaft. The notion of mutual advantage is important to Gesellschaft, and techniques of bargaining and negotiation are gesellschaftlich tools. A common definition of community today involves a group with common values that comes together to accomplish a common goal (e.g., Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Generally the values under discussion relate only to the goal and how it is to be accomplished. This would be a Gesellschaft, in Tonnies' schema, not a Gemeinschaft, because it hinges on a consciously selected goal. (pp. 14-15)

When Evergreen became an alternative high school, it maintained many of its unique communitarian features, but also acquired several bureaucratic ones. The long time staff members and former students whom I interviewed enjoyed telling the stories of how the school had changed since joining the large public school system. In the case report, I wrote the following description of the current school governance model:

> Evergreen had become an alternative high school within the Toronto Public School System in the late 1970s, and with that change acquired a designated Principal who was shared among all of the alternative high schools within the Toronto Board. Although the Principal communicated regularly with the school, s/he did not intervene in the daily administration unless required or asked to become involved. Teacher Coordinators chosen from the staff and by the staff each year acted as representatives of the Principal within the school. Although the Coordinators assumed responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the school, important decisions were made in a consensual manner by the entire staff at the weekly staff meetings. The Board of Directors was maintained from the original private school model and comprised two students, two parents, and two teachers who were elected from their respective groups. The Principal and one elected community member were also Directors on the Board. This body considered proposals received from school members or from the Toronto Board. From these proposals, new policies and directions for the school were formulated. Before final ratification and implementation, all proposed changes were

> presented at a school meeting for approval from the General Membership which included all students, parents, and staff.

With the acquisition of a designated principal, a unionized teaching staff, and board policies and curriculum standards that had to be followed, the administration of the school had become more Gesellschaft. As an alternative school, Evergreen was technically exempt from many of the "rules, layers of authority, and institutionalized purposes" of the bureaucratic public school system to which it now belonged. Nonetheless, many long time respondents still believed that the school had become more like the other schools within the system, schools to which they collectively referred as "mainstream." To these long time respondents, however, the changes in the student population that had occurred were as significant as the introduction of bureaucratic structures.

When Evergreen became a public school, the student population and the community which were served by the school had also changed. Adolescents came from all over Metropolitan Toronto after grades nine or ten to attend Evergreen alternative school for their last two or three years of high school. Students and parents made the choice to be a part of the Evergreen community; their decision was voluntary. Within Tonnies' theoretical framework, such associations are Gesellschaft in nature, based on "rational will" and characterized by contracts, negotiation, and mutual benefit. Merz and Furman (1997) offered the following definition for a community that is Gesellschaftlicht. Community is "a group with common values that comes together to accomplish a common goal" (p. 15). Tonnies' notion of Gesellschaft coupled with Merz and Furman's definition are constructs which are used to frame the following discussion of the current nature of community within Evergreen.

When asked about their decision to come to Evergreen, the student and parent respondents referred to the "mutually negotiated screening process" upon which their decision had been based. This process, called CEASA, was described in the case report in the following way:

> Prospective students interested in attending Evergreen Community High School were required to come to a meeting where the rules and codes of behavior, as well as the school program were explained. Before being accepted into the school, all students went through an interview with staff and peers during which time they were asked to explain how their personal and academic goals "fit" within the overall philosophical framework of the school.

> Students fondly referred to this mutually negotiated screening process as "being CEASAED."
>
> The Committee on Evaluation, Academic Standards and Admissions, or "CEASA," consisted of a rotating panel of two students and two teachers selected from a pool of ten students and five teachers. CEASA was the committee that interviewed prospective students. It was also the "problem-solving" body within the school. Teachers or students who felt that there had been some transgression of a rule, or a breech of the code of behavior could request a meeting with CEASA. During a problem-solving CEASA, all "sides" had the opportunity to speak and be heard. Questions, debate and sometimes argument were part of the process, after which the CEASA would make a recommendation and then forward it to the Teacher Coordinators for a decision. Any appeals were referred to the Board of Directors.

Through the admission process, students believed that they had been given the opportunity to "choose." They felt free to accept or reject the "values" and expectations outlined in the school rules and codes of behavior before becoming members of the school. All student and parent respondents believed that the CEASA process was a fair one and that the rules and codes for behavior were reasonable. Over the time that I spent studying the school, all of the students whom I interviewed and to whom I spoke could recite the Three Rules and paraphrase the Codes of Behavior, indicating the importance that they attributed to these school structures which set the parameters for the formation of relationships between and among students and adults, relationships that were initially Gesellschaft in nature.

Referring to Tonnies' theoretical framework, Etzioni (1993) argued that "the naturally occurring bonds between people" characteristic of Gemeinschaft are less likely to occur in contemporary urban societies which value diversity and choice, often to the exclusion of social commitment and responsibility. Etzioni depicted modern urban communities as Gesellschaft and "non-geographic," where members were bound by their agreement to "a basic set of morals," a type of "manifesto of principles" regarding responsibility to others (p. 122). Etzioni's "manifesto of principles" is reminiscent of the admission guidelines, school rules, codes of behavior, and CEASA process as they are described in the case report and above. Indeed, transgression of school rules and behaviors deemed inappropriate resulted in Evergreen students being placed on "probation." Repeat offenses could ultimately lead to students being issued a letter indicating that they were being expelled from the school because they had "Ceased to Profit" from the community experience. The school's governance model, CEASA, Three Rules, and Codes of Behavior together formed a type of "manifesto of principles" which was contractual in nature, stressing responsibility to others and mutual benefit.

All staff, parent, and student respondents understood and accepted the rationale underlying the Evergreen "manifesto of principles" which set common ground rules for participation in school and classroom activities. Many also believed, as Arnold claimed, that "you can put certain structures into place that enable things to happen, or at least create the possibility, but I don't think that you can mandate community." The "manifesto of principles," Gesellschaft in nature, was the mandate upon which school members from diverse backgrounds built relationships which, although initially Gesellschaft, also displayed characteristics which were Gemeinschaft in nature. Merz and Furman (1997) argued that the presence of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft within schools presents a paradox which inevitably causes tension, but which also holds promise:

> We cannot have a life or a school that is only Gemeinschaft today, modern society simply will not tolerate it. Neither can we have a life or a school that is only Gesellschaft, because human nature will not allow it. Today we must recognize that schools are a mix of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. In addition to these simultaneous and conflicting demands, there is an increasing awareness that schools may be one of the few social institutions left that bridge the gap between the individual or family and the larger civic society. Citizens need to voice their values and preferences as a means of shaping society. . . . (pp. 97-98)

Prompted by a blend of "rational will" and "natural will," school members became self-managing and self-organizing through their participation in community activities focused on making sense of the world and life's experiences. The conflicting and often paradoxical demands of the Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft underpinning the pervasive "sense of place" at Evergreen were critical attributes of the context of leadership.

From Manifesto of Principles to Moral Authority. Even though I witnessed and heard of several instances where school rules were broken and codes of behavior not followed, during the time I spent studying the school only six transgressions were considered serious enough to convene a CEASA, and only two "Ceased To Profit" letters were issued. Through my conversations with four students who had been involved in the CEASAs, I learned that although perpetrators were not necessarily happy with the decision of this representative group comprised of peers and teachers, all believed that they "had been heard" and that the "CEASA process had been fair." Jas, an 18 year old student in his third semester at Evergreen, articulated in concise fashion what several other student respondents claimed when he stated that the rules were "flexible guidelines to help keep order;" that they "allowed everyone to progress." Sheila, a parent who had one son attending Evergreen and another who had graduated the year before, explained that within the clearly defined parameters of Evergreen's "manifesto of principles" students learned to accept responsibility for setting goals for individual performance and boundaries for their social behavior. During one interview she explained:

> "Ultimately we do not want our children to rely on the rules. We want them to understand that rules are simply guidelines to be there while they develop their own set of internal cues of control. It's that set of controlling values that will help them throughout their lives determine whether something is right or wrong, whether something is beneficial or not. I believe that students who attend and graduate from Evergreen are people who are able to set their own boundaries."

Over the time spent studying the school, it became clear to me that the commonly held values to which students had voluntarily committed through the process of the admission CEASA gradually became involuntary and internalized; in some cases within a very short time span. Through participation in school meetings, CEASA, and other class and school-related activities, school members compelled by "natural will" as well as "rational will" became self-managing as they modeled the values embodied in the Evergreen "manifesto of principles." According to Tom and Arnold, over the twenty years that they had been on staff at Evergreen, very few students or teachers had ever been called before a CEASA committee more than once and only a handful had ever received a "Ceased To Profit" letter. Sergiovanni (1996) put forth the contention that "moral authority" evolves in schools where people are bound by "natural will." Moral authority, he claimed, eventually supersedes the institutionalized authority of rules, contracts, and "manifestos of principles:"

> Compacts and shared commitments among principals, parents, teachers, and students and the moral authority they provide, are key in applying Community Theory to schools. As this authority becomes established, it speaks as a moral voice that substitutes for the usual management systems and leadership strategies we now use to provide direction, and to control people and events. This moral voice compels everyone in the school to meet their commitments, and to become self-managing. (p. 58)

Moral authority along with the authority embodied in the rules and codes of behavior were critical attributes of the context of leadership at Evergreen. The principal source of authority at Evergreen school, however, derived from the internalized and shared values implicit in the "manifesto of principles," and not from the rigid application of the explicit rules and codes of behavior themselves. Equality and mutual respect were the internalized and shared values, the "moral authority" upon which adults and students built their trusting relationships. Within the context of these relationships, school members became self-managing and self-organizing.

Trusting Relationships Built on Equality and Mutual Respect. When asked to describe their school experience, student and staff respondents talked about how they were treated and how they felt. All referred to the high degree of trust which they attributed to relationships that they believed were built on equality and mutual respect for differences. Barbara, for example, had been a student at Evergreen for three years during which time she had been a student representative on CEASA and on the Board of Directors. Although she had assumed several roles within the school that could be viewed as hierarchical and carrying special status or even "power," when asked about her experiences at Evergreen, she chose to speak of her relationships with other school members. In the following passage taken from Barbara's second interview, her view of power and authority is reminiscent of Sergiovanni's explanation of "moral authority." For Barbara, authority and power within the school emanated from the network of relationships built on the shared values of equality and respect:

> "I think that everyone does work together. It's not like the teachers are the authority and the students have to listen and do as they are told. We all go by our first names. The teachers respect us and we respect each other. We're equals. I don't even know who the younger students are because we are all in the same classes together. We don't go by age or grades here. We all have equal power here. The key to the feeling of community around here is the mutual respect and equality that is going on in all of the relationships."

As I watched and listened to the interactions between and among students and teachers over the time spent studying the school, it appeared that most school members operated from similar assumptions and beliefs.

The complex network of relationships at Evergreen was not dominated by one role or another. Arnold emphasized the importance of the equal status shared by teachers and students when he claimed that "teachers and students are on equal footing. That's why we go by our first name. We teachers have no cloak of authority to hide behind." When participating in various governance activities within the school community, each member was afforded "equal right to rule" (Morgan, 1997, p. 157). The opening vignette of the case report, "Community in Action," illustrated this fundamental belief in equality and direct democracy. Students, teachers, and the principal had the same opportunity to speak and be heard at the school meeting where people tried to understand and decide upon an appropriate response to the government's discussion paper on educational reform. Lambert et al. (1996) called for the redefinition of traditional roles within schools as a means of changing hierarchical relationships and conventional views of authority and power within school organization:

> Roles determine how we interact with each other, what we talk about, what we don't talk about, and how we behave. . . . This is part of what makes shared leadership so difficult. Yet to create relationships that are different, roles must be redefined. Becoming full participants requires that we learn our way into new definitions of ourselves and our work. (p. 26)

Through their shared governance activities and through their participation as equals in all school activities, Evergreen school members learned "new definitions" which were based on the belief that all school members were equals within non-hierarchical relationships.

All student respondents stated that they had made the choice to come to Evergreen because they had not been able to conform and "fit into" the regular school system for one reason or another. Parent respondents made similar remarks about their children who were currently attending Evergreen. In some cases, their differences had caused them to become isolated and alienated within the regular school system. Shannon, a student respondent in her second semester at Evergreen, claimed that at her previous high school of 2 600 she had difficulties which included being harassed. These students, who in the case study I have called "refugees from the mainstream," had forged meaningful and trusting relationships with their teachers and peers at Evergreen, something, by their own admission, they had been unable to accomplish fully in their previous schools. All students believed that they had been able to establish relationships because of the equality and the mutual respect for differences which they experienced in their relationships with other school members. They did not have to conform in order to "fit into" a hierarchy of relationships governed by pre-established norms in order to be accepted. In the case report, Shannon is quoted as saying:

> "I am happier here than I have been in any other school. I feel safe. Put downs and verbal abuse are not acceptable. There is a lot of respect and trust. Everyone has a place. Everyone feels special."

In a similar vein, Hillary, a new student at Evergreen explained:

> "It's friendly and there is a lot of respect. Students and teachers are on an equal footing and really listen to each other's ideas even when they don't agree. There is no pressure to conform. When people are friendly and respectful, there is a lot of trust. People feel free to express themselves."

Lambert et al. (1996) and others (Barth, 1990; Gaskell, 1995; Lightfoot, 1983; Sergiovanni, 1995a) have studied and written about the importance of positive relationships in promoting school effectiveness. Lambert et al. (1996) and Sergiovanni (1995a) made specific reference to a recent report issued by the Institute for Education and Transformation (1992) at the Claremont Graduate School which "points to the quality of relationships and other relationship themes as the critical leverage points for school improvement" (Sergiovanni, 1995a, p. 69). Citing the written report which is based on the findings of an extensive study of several culturally diverse schools, Sergiovanni stressed the importance of this finding:

> Our data strongly suggest that the heretofore identified *problems* of schooling (lowered achievement, higher dropout rates, and problems in the teaching profession) are rather *consequences* of much deeper and more fundamental problems (Institute, 1992: 11). (p. 70)

Lambert et al. (1996) interpreted the "deep absence of authentic relationships in schools" to be the most serious of these fundamental problems (p. 28). For these authors, "authentic relationships" were essential for school members to "evolve, emerge and grow" together. Based on findings from multiple research studies which link student achievement to supportive relationships and membership in community (p. 43), these authors defined "authentic relationships" as:

> Holding a long-term investment and concern for the growth and development of colleagues, students, and parents; learning from each other in reciprocal relationships, for reciprocity distributes power and authority more equally; providing sustained support for other members of the community by being there for each other; insisting on the growth of each other by holding and exercising high expectations; seeking truths together, trying to figure out how things are really working in the school; creating collective memories together

> and respecting, but not becoming stuck in, these shared experiences; understanding the need for multiple patterns of relationships that nourish a purposeful community; seeking meaning together so that relationships and communities make sense.
> (p. 28)

Authentic relationships, Lambert et al. claimed, "form a dense network of connections thereby increasing the complexity of the system and increasing the capacity for self-organization" (p. 43). "Because people are connected to one another," they concluded, "differences become a strength rather than a liability" (p. 46). Over the months that I spent studying the school, it became evident to me that the respondents valued their relationships with other school members because these relationships were multi-dimensional and, using Lambert et al.'s definition, "authentic." Within the dense network of relationships, diversity and non-conformity at Evergreen could flourish without causing segmentation. For school members, the complex network of relationships provided the context in which they became self-identifying and self-organizing as they participated in activities going on inside and outside of the classrooms. The trusting relationships built on equality and mutual respect were a critical attribute of the context of leadership at Evergreen.

Freedom and Individual Expression. Through the interviews with parents, staff, and students, and through my own observations over the time spent studying Evergreen, I became aware of the importance that school members attributed to freedom and individual expression. Respondents often mentioned the portion of the school's philosophy statement which claimed "strong support for individual expression" within the "written rules of the school and within the behavioral standards which reflect the ethos of the community." When asked, most respondents did not feel that their individuality was compromised by the school rules and behavioral standards; nor did they feel that their relationships with other school members constrained their freedom. All student respondents considered themselves to be autonomous and "non-conformist." All teachers believed they were, as Arnold put it, "an unruly bunch of individuals." Within the well-defined parameters of community and the complex network of relationships, school members still felt, as Hillary stated, "free to express themselves." At first, it appeared paradoxical to me that individuals could simultaneously feel "free" and value their "connectedness" to others. In order to probe my own understanding of how individuality and autonomy were accommodated within the school community, I considered the ecological theorists. Capra's (1996) ecological paradigm provides a useful theoretical framework for the following discussion of how individuals at Evergreen could simultaneously value their autonomy and interdependence within the school community.

Recently, social scientists and organizational theorists (Capra, 1996; Lambert et al., 1996; Morgan, 1997; Wheatley, 1992) have begun to draw on ecological theory in order to understand the dynamic complexities of living systems. Fritjof Capra (1996), for example, has extended ecological thinking and systems theory to include a discussion of social organizations including educational institutions. Claiming that there is currently a shift occurring from a mechanistic to an ecological paradigm, Capra argued that the world should not be viewed as "a collection of isolated objects, but as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent" (p. 7). Within what Capra described as the ecological paradigm, social institutions such as schools are networks of interdependent and non-hierarchical relationships, where thinking is "intuitive, synthetical, holistic, and non-linear," where "conservation, cooperation, quality, and partnership" are valued, and where power is "influence with others" (p. 10). Independence, Capra argued, is an illusion. The individual self cannot be separate from others and only exists in social organizations with others. Within social organizations, which he calls "human communities," individuals are necessarily interconnected and interdependent. Capra's contention is that in recognizing and accepting what he calls the "human condition," individuals are freed from the "Cartesian anxiety" which is prevalent in contemporary society:

> This, then, is the crux of the human condition. We are autonomous individuals, shaped by our own history of structural changes. We are self-aware, aware of our individual identity--and yet when we look for an independent self within our world of experience we cannot find any such entity.
>
> The origin of our dilemma lies in our tendency to create the abstractions of separate objects, including a separate self, and then to believe that they belong to an objective, independently existing reality. To overcome our Cartesian anxiety, we need to think systematically, shifting our conceptual focus from objects to relationships. Only then can we realize that identity, individuality, and autonomy do not imply separateness and independence. (p. 295)

This perspective of organization is vastly different from what Capra termed the dominant "mechanistic paradigm." This ecological view, however, is resonant with what I observed at Evergreen school and heard from several respondents who believed that their school curricula were based on assumptions belonging to what they called "the modern paradigm" and not the "dominant paradigm." Alicia, a student in her second year at the school, described how in belonging to the Evergreen community, she believed her identity, individuality, and sense of freedom were strengthened:

> "We all have our own idea about Utopia when we come to Evergreen, and we are all trying to get there. It's the creating our own space and the trying to get there that is important and that makes us a community. . . . I like knowing that this school is all my space. If I wanted to plant a garden outside, I could. That's how much freedom I feel I have. I know that I can be who I want to be. I will always be accepted. I will always have a voice."

Alicia claimed that through her relationships with others who shared her values and her "Utopian quest," she felt supported and accepted in her endeavors to express herself and to be free. Jas also believed that through their relationships inside and outside of class students, developed a sense of identity which was individual and self-aware, but not separate or independent:

> "This is a school where you can actually come out of your class and keep talking. We will debate issues like sexism and racism. Teachers will philosophize about them and then leave us to come up with out own conclusion. . . In mainstream high school they don't ever seem to teach you things that apply to the outside world. Here we examine and debate new ideas. Because of the way the world is changing right now, traditional lifestyles are going to have to be modified. Innovation is the key. I think that going to a high school like this prepares you for the changing world and times."

Several of the 22 respondents expressed the belief that individuality, autonomy, and identity were integral to their relationships with other school members at Evergreen. For most, there was no inherent paradox. For most, the "individual self" was an "interdependent and interconnected self," not a "separate, independent self."

Advocates for a restructuring of the present school system along ecological lines, Lambert et al. (1996) referred to Capra's work in order to critique what he called the dominant "mechanistic paradigm" (p. 34). These authors put forth the contention that the dominant mechanistic view fails because it promotes the concept of schools as hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations shaped by thinking which is "rational, analytical, reductionist and linear," governed by values of "expansion, competition, quantity, and domination" (Capra, 1996, p. 10). Student and staff respondents who had chosen to leave their mainstream schools had become frustrated by what within Capra's theoretical framework would be called "mechanistic thinking and values." At Evergreen, respondents recognized and appreciated the ecological thinking and values underpinning the community and curricular activities. Several respondents made claims similar to Barbara's and Shauna's. These two students were quoted in the case report as saying that when they left their mainstream schools to come to Evergreen, they had had to "unlearn" what they thought education was. Through a curriculum which was "freed of the textbook," and characterized by "intuitive, synthetical, holistic, and non-linear thinking," as well as values of "conservation, cooperation, quality and partnership," students and teachers supported one another in their endeavors to be autonomous, self-aware, and individual.

Freedom and individual expression were central to the teaching and learning which occurred within the context of the interdependent and non-hierarchical relationships. Arnold claimed that there was a "dialectic" among school members where individuals, like phenomena within an eco-system, "co-evolved," and self-organized in order to sustain the "web of life" (p. 3). Freedom and individual expression comprised the unique and constantly changing curriculum of Evergreen school, and were critical attributes of the context of leadership.

School Culture of Permanence and Continuous Change. Recently, Wheatley (1992) examined how the shift from mechanistic to ecological thinking was affecting conventional notions of organization, organizational culture, and organizational leadership:

> If the physics of our universe is revealing the primacy of relationships, is it any wonder that we are beginning to reconfigure our ideas about management in relational terms?. . . The impact of vision, values, and culture occupies a great deal of organizational attention. We see their effects on organizational vitality, even if we can't quite define why they are such potent forces. . . . Our concept of organizations is moving away from the mechanistic creations that flourished in the age of bureaucracy. We have begun to speak in earnest of more fluid, organic structures, even of boundaryless organizations. We are beginning to recognize organizations as systems, construing them as "learning organizations" and crediting them with some type of self-renewing capacity. These are our first tentative forays into a new appreciation for organizations. My own experience suggests that we can forego that despair created by such common organizational events as change, chaos, information overload, and cyclical behaviors if we recognize that organizations are conscious entities, possessing many of the properties of living systems. (pp. 12-13)

Referring to Capra's concept of the "human community," Wheatley concluded that individuals were constantly evolving in and through their relationships with others. Human communities, according to Capra (1996), included educational, business, and political institutions which are "organizationally closed but open to the flows of energy and resources; their structures are determined by their histories of structural changes; they are intelligent because of the cognitive dimensions inherent in the processes of life"' (p. 298). Implicit in Capra's conceptualization of the human community is an organizational culture which is both permanent and continuously changing in rhythm with the evolving consciousness of the organizational members. Capra's "human community" is a useful construct for a final synthetical examination of the context of leadership at Evergreen.

Throughout the case report, I made several references to the permanent but constantly changing "sense of place" within Evergreen. In the final paragraph, for example, I have attempted to provide for the reader's vicarious experience by illustrating the permanence and impermanence inherent in the school culture:

> As people filed out of the lounge and gathered in the main foyer to take part in the aftermath of laughter, conversation, and discussion, there was a resurgence of the special feeling that permeated this old school building and seemed ever-present and ever-changing. . . . Community at Evergreen was an elusive ideal that brought people together to share and celebrate the accomplishments of individuals. The performance tonight, as those that had occurred during previous Coffee Houses, reflected the magical and ephemeral spirit that was Evergreen.

At Evergreen, the community understandings (Sergiovanni, 1995a, p. 69) and the Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft underpinning the participation in school governance and community activities provided a sense of permanence for school members who were aware of these "structures determined by histories of structural changes." These critical attributes of the school community contributed to the enduring and ever-present "sense of place" to which all 22 respondents referred. "Our understanding of who we are," Lambert et al. (1996) claimed, "becomes the basis for collectively organizing to realize the purposes and goals we are established to achieve;" it underpins the natural will of participants within educational communities to engage in the reciprocal processes of leadership (p. 44). Within a context of shared community understandings and shared values of equality, mutual respect, and trust, school members engaged in the processes of leadership, the "spirit" of Evergreen.

As respondents attempted to explain the ever-present but continuously changing "sense of place" at Evergreen, they often referred to the Yin and the Yang. Liz used the school logo as a metaphor to describe how diversity within the community provided the sense that the school culture was "fluid" and in constant motion:

> "Commonality is not the same as dogmatism. It's just the starting point. We've always agreed that there should be a place for diversity, but at the same time diversity shouldn't mean fragmentation. . . . Everyone's perception is different. We have to assure ourselves that we do in fact have commonality. That's why I like the school symbol of the Yin and the Yang. The school, like the symbol, acts as an envelope inside which is this swirling mass of differences that are constantly moving."

Liz's description of the Evergreen "envelope" is not unlike Aristotle's description of the political processes which, he claimed, provided a "non-coercive means of creating social order out of diversity while avoiding forms of totalitarian rule" or conformity (Morgan, 1997, p. 154).

All respondents believed that central to the continuous change going on at Evergreen was the teaching and learning. The individuals within the school community were co-evolving in and through their relationships and interactions with each other, giving rise to the "swirling mass of differences" depicted in Liz's description. When asked about her 17 years of experience within this alternative high school, Liz stressed the ephemeral quality of the curriculum which she believed evolved out of the teacher-student relationships built on values of equality and mutual respect:

> "Teaching is extraordinarily ephemeral. Teachers here really believe that students must have a say in what they are learning. We can provide an outline for that learning, but I find that a year from now, what I have worked on a particular day with a particular group will have disappeared or changed because it is specific to that time and those people. That's one of the remarkable things about Evergreen. It is in constant flux which encourages we teachers to be very creative, to be artists."

Alicia also used the Yin and Yang as a metaphor to describe her perception of what teaching and learning was like at Evergreen. Suggested in her description were ecological principles, which in terms of Capra's human communities comprised "the cognitive dimensions inherent in the processes of life:"

> "At Evergreen learning is not about textbooks; it's about personal growth and learning how to combine the intellectual and the emotional. . . . Learning is not a linear progression, but rather some kind of circular movement like the Yin Yang on the school symbol."

With no fixed lesson plans and no prescriptive textbooks, the Evergreen school curriculum was freed from the "Cartesian anxiety" to which all respondents alluded as they described their previous experiences in mainstream high schools. Within the network of relationships, school members participated in what Gail called the "creation of curriculum," as they endeavored to make sense of the human condition and support one another in what Alicia described as a shared Utopian quest. The processes underlying the quest to become self-aware, conscious, autonomous, and self-expressing individuals gave rise to the sense that the school culture was constantly changing.

Capra used the term "human spirit" to explain the processes leading to self-awareness and consciousness:

> Ultimately, deep ecological awareness is spiritual or religious awareness. When the concept of the human spirit is understood as the mode of consciousness in which the individual feels a sense of belonging, of connectedness, to the cosmos as a whole, it becomes clear that ecological awareness is spiritual in its deepest essence. (p. 7)

In describing the essence of the current shift from the mechanistic to ecological paradigm, Capra explained the cognitive dimensions comprising the "human spirit:"

> The essence of deep ecology is to ask deeper questions. This is also the essence of a paradigm shift. . . we need to be willing to question everything. So deep ecology asks profound questions about the very foundations of our modern, scientific, industrial, growth-oriented, materialistic world view and way of life. It questions this entire paradigm from an ecological perspective: from the perspective of our relationships to one another, to future generations, and to the web of life of which we are part. (pp. 7-8)

Believing that society was on the verge of a "paradigm shift," and being willing to ask "profound questions" about our "modern way of life" comprised the cognitive dimensions of the life processes and the essence of Capra's "human communities." It is an essence which is reminiscent of Lambert et al.'s (1995) definition of leadership (p. 29) and their definition of the "learning community:"

> Learning community refers to the processes and relationships among members that enable the entire community to learn and grow. These processes and

> relationships involve inquiry, dialogue, reflection, and action. . . . In schools in which change is the natural outgrowth of learning, there is a flow, an unfolding of next steps that makes sense because these steps have emerged from dialogue, reflection, and shared inquiry. Communities that have built learning into their ways of doing business together are resilient, capable of responding to change and struggles without being dismantled by them. . . . Natural change is systemic. It is connected to everything else. Natural change does not evoke crippling resistance but results from a feeling that "this makes sense."
> (pp. 12-13)

At Evergreen, the "sense of place" connected people to one another and to the struggle inherent in the "human condition" which they shared. Asking deep questions and engaging with others in the struggle to understand the human condition, while recreating it through community involvement and individual expression, comprised what many called the "spirit" of Evergreen Community High School.

The "Spirit" of Evergreen

Sergiovanni (1994) stated that "We humans seek meaning and significance above all, and building purposeful communities helps us find both" (p. 98). It was for the purpose of teaching adolescents "to question the status quo" and make sense of a world that was "changing in a dramatic way," claimed Tom, that the founders established Evergreen as a democratic school community. Lambert et al. (1995) claimed that leadership occurs in such purposeful communities. Their definition of leadership is "the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose of schooling" (p. 29). Inherent in the school culture of permanence and continuous change was a history and tradition of leadership as depicted by Lambert et al. The following passage develops these authors' conceptualization of the leadership phenomenon as relational, non-hierarchical, and reciprocal, with cognitive dimensions:

> Leadership is not a person or a role. It is the processes that make up the relationships among us. . . . In reciprocal relationships, we are sometimes givers and sometimes receivers. Relationships that are dominated by one role or another are deeply unsatisfying. Over time, they result in paternalistic relationships that establish dependencies and resentment. Authentic relationships, involve the realignment of power so that participants can emerge into leadership roles whereby they share more or less equally in guiding one another to new meanings. (pp. 21-22)

Wheatley (1992) made a similar assertion about the "primacy of relationships" in her conception of leadership. Leadership, Wheatley stated, were those activities focused on the construction of reality through "engagement with others and with events." The "spirit" of Evergreen to which respondents so often referred was the "engagement with others and with events" in the struggle to make sense of the human condition and recreate their world. School members at Evergreen were consistently engaged in the "spirit" of the struggle, but in ways that reflected their diversity.

Lambert et al. (1995) described Plato as a "constructivist" because of his contention that it was through dialogue and argument that individuals came to know. Knowledge, he believed, was internal, to be brought to consciousness after social interaction with "other." This process of "coming to know" or becoming conscious, Plato contended, characterized the human condition. Plato described the human condition in terms of three distinct but inter-related components of the human spirit: reason, courage and passion, and the sensual. These components, Plato argued, were interwoven and were the qualities upon which individuals could call in order to construct meaning about, and find significance in the condition that was constantly changing, the condition from which there was "no escape," but the condition to which "all humans must submit" (Saul, 1995, p. 185). The following discussion of the processes of leadership at Evergreen has been organized using Plato's names for the qualities of the human spirit: Reason, Courage and Passion, and the Sensual. These headings provide a framework for the discussion of the processes underpinning leadership at Evergreen Community High School, but in the Evergreen "spirit" should be viewed as inter-related and interwoven parts of the whole.

Reason. John Ralston Saul (1995) presented an extensive critique of what he called the dominant corporatist ideology which, he claimed, is currently undermining "the legitimacy of the individual as the citizen in a democracy" (p. 191). Arguing that "a citizen-based democracy is built upon participation" and the "acceptance of the virtue of uncertainty," Saul advocated "non-conformity" and "criticism" as mechanisms to access the public debate. In order to regain our status as a "conscious civilization," he concluded, citizens of democratic societies have to relinquish their corporatist desire for "inner comfort" and accept the "permanent psychic discomfort" of the struggle implicit in the human condition which we share (pp. 194-195). To be an individual in a democratic society, explained Saul, is to participate in government where the "individual citizenry acting as a whole" works to promote consciousness and common purposes:

> There are those who talk about individualism as if it were a replacement for government. There are others who see it as the enemy of government. . . . The individual lives in society. That is the primary characteristic of individualism. The only question is what form that society will take. . . . In a democracy they [individuals] are the government. . . . The most powerful force possessed by the individual citizen is her own government. Or governments, because a multiplicity of levels means a multiplicity of strengths. (pp. 76-77)

All staff, parent, and student respondents understood the importance of citizen involvement in the multiple forms of government within Evergreen. Through the admission CEASA and through their participation in other school governance structures, school members became proficient in the democratic way of life at Evergreen. With "equal right to rule" (Morgan, 1997, p. 157), school members practiced reciprocity. Sometimes "givers" and sometimes "takers," school members believed that they "shared more or less equally in guiding one another to new meaning" and constructing goals for individual and collective action (Lambert et al., 1996, pp. 21-22).

The opening scene of the case report, "Community in Action," showed the Evergreen "citizenry acting as a whole" as they discussed, debated, and questioned the Ontario Government's discussion paper on secondary school reform. In order to understand the relationship between what they knew and what they had to do, students engaged in the reciprocal processes of leadership which I described in the following way in the case report:

> By the end of the afternoon as the Advisory Groups summarized and reported their ideas, there was a growing sense of student resolve. Complying with the government's directive to complete the survey in the appendix of the blue and white pamphlet was not considered a valid measure of "good citizenship" within this group of young people concerned about equality and social justice. No one within the student group felt that their views would be adequately represented by conforming in this way. Although none of these students would be directly affected by the proposed legislation and changes, they were unanimous in their commitment to question those advocating reform.

Through their criticism and non-conformity, and mobilized by their concern for the future of public education, the students formed a "Students For Action Committee" in order to draft a meaningful and resonant response to the government paper. The actions taken by this student committee were examples of the direct democracy (Morgan, 1997, p. 157) which I witnessed several times during the period I spent studying the school. Within Lambert et al.'s (1996) theoretical framework, they were illustrations of leadership action at Evergreen:

> If leadership is defined as a concept transcending individuals, roles, and behaviors, then anyone in the educational community--teachers, administrators, parents, students--can engage in leadership actions. Leadership actions represent reciprocal processes, participation in educational communities, and constructing a common meaning about the purpose of education. In other words, leadership is the participatory learning opportunities that exist among us in a school community. (p. 72)

Ben, a student in his first semester at Evergreen, understood the importance of citizen participation. In the case report he commented on the importance of criticism and non-conformity in promoting a conscious citizenry within society. His description of the role of the "fool" is reminiscent of Lambert et al.'s (1996) definition of leadership as a set of reciprocal processes which transcends individual roles and which promotes learning and consciousness:

> "Right now in our society with all the changes that the Government is trying to make we need people who will argue, who have passion, and who care. In medieval times there was a fool. The fool always told the king through humor or a song what was wrong with society, or a problem that people had. At this school we are not only concerned about ourselves as individuals. We are like a bunch of fools. We like to point out what is wrong and how we can make society better."

Ben's observations and metaphor also illustrated how the Evergreen citizens, "acting as a whole," continued to provide leadership in the same democratic and communitarian spirit as the school founders. Saul (1995) proposed formalizing "citizen participation" as a mechanism to legitimize "criticism, non-conformism, and disinterest" within the public debate:

> It is therefore a matter of inserting the citizen as citizen into the system in whatever way we can. And then letting the mechanisms of criticism combined with his levels of involvement take effect. . . . Corporatist society has structured itself so as to eliminate citizen participation in public affairs, except through the isolated act of voting and through voluntary activities. . . . Within a corporatist society democracy is formally discouraged. It is marginalized into volunteerism. And yet, by simply formalizing the citizen's participation--that is, by setting aside a certain number of hours a week through our structuring of the official activities of the individual--we would be able to launch large numbers of people into public activity. What effect they would have cannot be judged in advance. But in a society obsessed by structure, we

> would have officially recognized the mainstream function of criticism, non-conformism and disinterest.
> (pp. 172-173).

At Evergreen, the "function of criticism, non-conformism and disinterest" was mainstream and officially recognized through the school governance structures, history, and traditions. These processes of leadership, where the citizenry acted as a whole, were the reasoned and rational underpinnings of the Evergreen "spirit."

Courage and Passion. The weekly staff meetings in which I took part over the time spent studying the school were a consistent reminder of the democratic traditions and history of leadership at Evergreen Community High School. My observations of the staff meeting during my first visit to Evergreen prompted me to include the following description of the "Evergreen spirit" in my journal and later in the case report:

> Each staff member had added items to the agenda that she or he felt needed to be communicated and discussed. . . . The meeting had no official chairperson, and participants took turns speaking and being heard. The intensity of the discussion increased or decreased depending on the speaker's level of conviction and the reaction of the group. Over the course of the next two hours I watched and listened, as if witness to some important parliamentary procedure, where committed participants debated each topic while striving to convince and understand self and others before coming to a decision and moving on. . . . Individual differences were recognized and accounted for; there were no "winners" and "losers" in this process. During the two hour meeting there was no voting, no "majority rule" invoked within this group committed to including and understanding the diverse voices within the school community. In this gathering of highly energized, passionate and compassionate teachers, I sensed a willingness to take up the struggle on the full range of educational issues.

All staff members believed that the staff meetings were integral to sustaining the school community. In the case report, I wrote:

> Through my interviews with staff I learned that all of the teachers believed that the Wednesday staff meetings were significant events. 'I think that part of the success of the school is those staff meetings,' asserted Tom. 'Everybody has a different style and approach, and it's important to find out how people think at certain times and what their issues are.' For Tom, the weekly staff meetings provided the space and time for the affirmation of the core beliefs which were the spirit of Evergreen.

Through their engagement with others in the weekly staff meetings, teachers continuously challenged their individual and collective understanding of events, core beliefs, and established purposes and goals. Lambert et al. (1996) contended that teachers are "so trained in the thinking and language of mechanistic hierarchies" that becoming conscious of their own assumptions requires each teacher "to hold onto ideas, values, and beliefs and; at the same time to hold those things in question" (pp. 60-61). These authors concluded that:

> The nature of learning in community requires that leaders support and model the reciprocal processes of speaking one's mind and heart and listening when challenged. (p. 61)

During the weekly staff meetings, I observed the Evergreen teachers consistently engage in the struggle to make sense of events and issues, recognize and honor diversity and, as Liz said, "discuss and debate until we all get to a working level of commonality." Through their interactions, these teachers demonstrated the passion required to speak "one's mind and one's heart," and the courage required to listen and learn "when challenged."

Teachers supported and modeled the reciprocal processes of leadership within their classrooms as well. In the case report, I included extensive descriptions of the classrooms which I found to be "metaphorical in the sense that they created a visual impression of each teacher's individuality." Staff culture, claimed Lambert et al. (1996), is composed of the norms, beliefs, and values that constitute "the way things are done in a school," and "is created through experiences that take place over time" (pp. 51-52). Citing a major study of staff culture conducted within several urban high schools, Lambert et al. concluded that

> a staff culture that supports in-depth collaboration, a willingness to confront old assumptions, and an openness to discuss hard issues leads to schoolwide or departmentwide changes that benefit students and their learning. Connecting, relating, and learning together do make good conditions for student engagement and learning in school. (p. 52)

Arnold, one of the long time staff members, echoed these remarks when he explained the "dialectic" which he believed occurred between the students and teachers at Evergreen:

> "We teachers are a pretty unruly bunch of individuals. Most of us have strong beliefs, are confident in our knowledge, and have a passion for what we teach. I think that when the students see how passionate we are about what we are teaching, how much we really are caught up in ideas, that energy is in some way communicated to them. It's as if they catch fire."

Students, by their own admission, did "catch fire" through their "connecting, relating, and learning" with other students and teachers at Evergreen. Six student respondents spoke about the specific "turning point" where they became self-managing and self-organizing learners. Each referred to the innovative approaches to teaching and learning at Evergreen and how they differed from those encountered in previous schools. Each referred to specific teachers and some used the word "mentor" in acknowledging the reciprocal relationships which they shared with several adults at Evergreen.

Hillary, a new student at the school, described the reciprocal processes going on between and among school members by comparing her impressions of Evergreen with what she had experienced in her previous school:

> "Students and teachers are on equal footing and really listen to each other's ideas even when they don't agree. It's great talking to people who care so much about ideas. In my old school, there were cliques and if you didn't do sports you weren't cool. Teachers never talked to students outside of the classroom."

Barbara could pinpoint the event that had caused her to "catch fire." During her second semester at Evergreen, she had taken an African American course which Gail had taught:

> "When I took that course something clicked for me because I really loved it. There was a whole momentum in that. I was learning and it felt good. I remember thinking 'I want to do this. It's really important to me.' When you are in that state of mind, everything else kind of fits into place and you don't want it to end."

Barbara had initially been intimidated by the passionate commitment to ideas demonstrated by individual teachers within the school. After two years, however, she had moved from being a student on "probation" for poor attendance, to being a well-respected student representative on CEASA and the Board of Directors. The something that "clicked," the "momentum," and the "state of mind" were phrases that Barbara used to describe the way in which she had moved, over time, from her awareness of herself as a separate entity independent of others, to her recognition of her interdependence and connectedness with others at Evergreen. Like several other student respondents who claimed to have "caught fire" since arriving at Evergreen, Barbara had regrets about graduating and having to leave the high school. In describing what she would miss the most about her Evergreen experience, Barbara talked about the "spirit" within the school:

> Barbara, and other long time school members believed that the collective pursuits going on within the school contributed to the special feeling of Evergreen. "This is my fourth semester here and every semester the school changes. Our school symbol is the Yin and Yang because life here is always flowing and evolving. When I leave this year I will miss being part of those changes. I will miss the Evergreen spirit."

Most school members, like Hillary and Barbara, recognized the overall effect of people becoming involved in the individual and collective activities occurring throughout the school. When asked about the high level of enthusiasm among students like Hillary and Barbara, Gail explained the impact of the Evergreen curriculum in the following way:

> "When our students say that they are enthusiastic about learning, it's because they are learning about worlds of which they were unaware. They are learning about realities that are relevant to their being. As their teachers, we don't present 'information' that we ask them to 'spit back' at us. We present 'worlds' and ask, 'What do they mean to you and how are you going to make them real in your life?'"

Most recognized the "special feeling" or "spirit" that was created when people, prompted by their passion and their courage, engaged with others in exploring "worlds of which they were unaware" and in making them "real" in their lives.

Capra (1996) and others (Lambert et al., 1996; Morgan, 1997; Saul, 1995; Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1996; Wheatley, 1992) have theorized about organizations as living systems and have used the term "learning organization." Consciousness in human communities, claimed Capra (1996), is characterized by awareness of "self," but self-awareness and consciousness can only occur through our interactions with others. Citing Maturana's theory of consciousness, Capra concluded that "we can understand human consciousness only through language and the whole social context in which it is embedded. As its Latin root--con-scire ("knowing together")--might indicate, consciousness is essentially a social phenomenon" (p. 291). "To be human is to exist in language. In language we coordinate our behavior and together in language we bring forth our world. . . The objects we bring forth [including the self] are brought forth through action" (p. 290).

Evergreen students and teachers brought forth their world and themselves through the "reciprocal processes of speaking one's mind and heart and listening when challenged." Through their interaction with others in school and classroom activities, teachers and students struggled to become conscious and self-aware; to understand the relationship between what they knew and believed, and what they did (Saul, 1995, p. 5). School members through these actions of courage and passion embodied the "spirit" of leadership at Evergreen.

The Sensual. Over the time that I spent studying the school, I became progressively aware that the reciprocal processes underlying the struggle to become conscious and self-aware involved communication which was not uniquely verbal. School members "brought forth their world" and themselves using the language of the senses as well as the language of reason, and courage and passion. Within the case report, I have included extensive description of the visual displays which I observed throughout the school. These displays, I learned, were often representative of the questioning and probing of the status quo and of "realities" that were, as Gail had said, "relevant to their being." Over the course of my time at Evergreen, I observed and took part in the conversations and discussions that were ignited by these creative expressions of individual and collective consciousness. In particular, the visual montages presented in the room called "The Gallery" provoked profound questioning and debate over perceptions and the nature of reality.

In the case report, I recounted how the members of the Women In Literature class conceptualized and created one such visual montage. I included the story of "The Womb" in order to illustrate the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of the artistic communication which I observed repeatedly while studying the school. In order to communicate what they had come to know and believe about oppression and violence against women within society, the female students within this class constructed a replica of the womb. Once installed in The Gallery, the womb symbolically provided the context for art work, poetry, and music that students had created as an expression of what they believed and felt about social injustice. As these students moved from verbal communication into other forms of communication, they engaged in the reciprocal processes of making sense of their world and establishing and accomplishing a common purpose. Over the two weeks that it took to plan and create the display, I watched as members of this class engaged in leadership action. I witnessed these women become leaders in facilitating the understanding and learning of others within the school community.

Within the school building, participation with others occurred through reciprocal processes which involved all of the senses in communication that was multi-layered and multi-dimensional. Several respondents referred to education at Evergreen as "performance." Shauna, a student who had graduated from Evergreen 15 years before, made the claim that, "Every day at Evergreen was like some grand event." Alicia, in describing the integration of emotional and intellectual aspects of learning at Evergreen, stated, "In my drama class I have learned to stand and look out into the audience. At Evergreen, we are all performers as we are all each other's audience." As I wrote the closing vignette of the case report, I attempted to capture the visual, the sensual, and the aura of creativity within the school. I attempted to communicate the importance attributed to performance as a sensual expression of individual and collective consciousness. The story of the Coffee House in the case report was included in order to illustrate the multiple dimensions of leadership within Evergreen.

Capra (1996) explained the complexity of linguistic networks and patterns of communication within human communities where relationships have become reciprocal:

> The uniqueness of being human is our ability to continually weave the linguistic network in which we are embedded. . . . In a human conversation our inner world of concepts and ideas, our emotions, and our body movements become tightly linked in a complex choreography of behavioral coordination. . . . Both partners are locked into this precisely synchronized sequence of rhythmic movements, and the linguistic coordination of their mutually triggered gestures lasts as long as they remain involved in their conversation. (p. 291)

To become a member of the Evergreen Community was to accept an invitation to participate in an on-going conversation that involved all of the senses in bringing forth not "the world," or even "a world," but "several worlds," simultaneously. To be a member of the Evergreen community was to engage with others in the construction of a reality that was multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and constantly evolving. To be a school member at Evergreen was to engage the spirit of leadership through an on-going conversation and the continuous construction of reality.

Tensions Underlying the Context and Processes of Leadership

In the case report and in the preceding discussion of the context and processes of leadership, I have made multiple references to what I have called the "struggle" shared by Evergreen school members. I selected this particular word because it was one which respondents often used with a connotation that was neither negative nor positive. Respondents tended to use the word "struggle" to embody the tensions inherent within the complex network of relationships that comprised this school community characterized by diversity, non-conformity, and individual expression. In the case report, I alluded to my own connotation of the word and the source of my selection of this metaphor:

> "Without Struggle There Can Be No Progress." I had read these words of Frederick Douglass on one of the posters in the classroom with the blue carpet that first day. 'Struggle' was the aspect of the Evergreen spirit that resonated within the classrooms, the student lounge, and the staff meetings. It was the way that this highly diverse group of individuals engaged in sense-making. Like the Yin and the Yang, the constant struggle between polarities was not intended to favor 'black' or 'white.' Occasionally, however, the constantly swirling mass of differences gave rise to the tensions within the school community.

Within the section of the case report titled "Tensions Within Community," I described several aspects of the tensions underpinning the leadership context and processes at Evergreen. The following is a further examination of those tensions which I have organized under the headings: "The Paradox of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft," and "The Clashes Between Ecological and Mechanistic Thinking."

The Paradox of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

In the preceding section, titled "The Mix of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft," I outlined the changes that had occurred, over time, since Evergreen had become an alternative school within the public school system. In the minds of the long time staff members, the acquisition of a designated principal, a unionized teaching staff, board policies, and a more diversified and transient student population had caused a movement from a school community which was primarily Gemeinschaft in nature, to a school community that was a mixture of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. In the case report, I included several comments made by long time staff members alluding to the tensions underpinning this movement and blending:

> "Community was stronger and more continuous a few year ago. With changes in public attitudes and School Board policy, staff and students no longer meet as a community outside of the school." . . . Staff members and students expressed the concern over what they perceived to be the changing student population within the school community. Several staff members and students also expressed a concern over the growing student population of the school, and felt that it was critical to maintain the "small size" in order to preserve the unique community feeling within the school. . . One staff

> member felt it was time to not rest on laurels, but to revisit the mandate and philosophy of the school and affirm "commonality" while recognizing diversity.

Merz and Furman (1997) argued that the unavoidable mix of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft within schools today presents a paradox which holds promise, but inevitably causes tensions (pp. 97-98). Within Evergreen, the "simultaneous and conflicting demands of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft" often gave rise to tensions and struggle as school members endeavored to make sense of their individual and collective experiences within a school environment which was constantly changing (p. 97).

The school's governance model, CEASA, Three Rules, and Codes of Behavior together formed a "manifesto of principles" (Etzioni, 1993, p. 127) at Evergreen which was contractual in nature, stressing responsibility to others and mutual benefit. The "manifesto of principles," Gesellschaft in nature, was the mandate upon which school members from diverse backgrounds built relationships. All student respondents understood and accepted the "manifesto of principles" which set common ground rules for participation in school and classroom activities, but relationships were not just Gesellschaft in nature. Students were compelled by "natural will" as well as "rational will" when forming their relationships with others at Evergreen. Several respondents reported that some students who made the choice to come to the school started out their experience with good intentions vis-a-vis the "manifesto of principles," but were unable to "set their own boundaries for behavior and agendas for learning;" they remained outsiders. These students who, as Marie described them, were "restless and searching" and unable to "get down to work and get some credits" were eventually "asked to leave" the school community. Ironically, most of these students who spent prolonged periods of time on probation for poor attendance, poor academic performance, or inappropriate behavior were still able to develop positive relationships which were Gemeinschaft in nature. Able to fit into the Gemeinschaft but not the Gesellschaft of Evergreen, these students often caused school members to struggle as they came to some common understanding of the purpose of school, and the intent of the "manifesto." The intensity of this struggle at the first staff meeting prompted me to write the following passage in my journal and later to include it in the case report:

> The tension among the participants was greatest during the discussion of the "Students on Probation."... As transgressions were described and as strategies for dealing with the students who were repeat offenders were agreed upon, it became apparent that these were not rigid rules, but rather broad policies which provided latitude... Individual differences were recognized and accounted for; there were no "winners" and "losers" in this process.

Similarly, there were staff members who were unable to accept and adjust to the mix of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft of the Evergreen school culture. Doug remarked that:

> "Most teachers who come to an alternative school want to be there and make the adjustment. Others never do. The personnel thing is the most difficult part of the job as far as I am concerned because where in a regular school you function by clearly defined rules, in alternative schools you don't. Alternative schools have a very different culture. They do not go by the same rules as regular schools and everyone must accept that. If they don't, then it becomes very disruptive. It is very divisive when disaffected staff call on the rules to solve a problem; it is a kind of opting out."

Over the time that I spent studying the school, I observed several instances where staff members struggled with the paradox inherent in the Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft nature of Evergreen Community High School. When teachers became frustrated with the struggle and their inability to come to consensus on an issue, there were moments when individuals suggested "opting out." During the time I spent studying the school, one teacher, for example, had stopped attending staff meetings because she felt that her voice was not being heard in the discussion and debate surrounding school issues. Another teacher made the following comments about the conflicting demands of relationships with colleagues that were simultaneously Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft:

> "Many staff members talk about the importance of trust, yet the same people will talk about the rules of the profession. There is an effort to be professional, but there is an effort to be family. Those two models are often inconsistent."

Doug also alluded to the conflicting and simultaneous demands of the Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft when he spoke about how difficult it sometimes was for teachers to accept that students had "equal right to rule" within the democratic governance model of the school. During the time I spent studying the school, I observed two specific occasions where teachers struggled with their own understanding of "student equality." The first occurred when students called a whole school meeting and demanded information regarding the circumstances surrounding the leave of absence of one of their teachers. The second occurred when students wrote a letter to the principal requesting his intervention because they believed that their "right" to attend staff meetings was not being honored by the teachers. In classrooms, teachers encouraged students to "question authority" and to question the status quo. Occasionally, however, the students felt compelled to question the legitimacy of the authority exercised by their teachers. In the instances where I observed the students question the authority of the teachers, the reaction of individual teachers was mixed. In the case report, I have quoted one teacher who described why it was important for school members to challenge one another. She believed that challenge was inherent in the Evergreen governance model:

> "It's not that I dislike harmony, but I am not oriented toward harmony for the sake of harmony. Sometimes disagreement is a really good opportunity for learning. It's the same academically. In a Socratic situation you constantly ask questions. You have to validate why you are saying what you are saying. Disagreement can be a very productive thing. It can give people cause for thought."

Educators, by virtue of their training and experiences with organization, claimed Merz and Furman (1997), are accepting of mechanistic hierarchies and efficiency-production models, the Gesellschaft. Arguing that the "traditional ideals of democracy have been overshadowed by the ideals of efficiency and uniform standards," these authors appealed to educators to "recognize the overwhelming character of Gesellschaft in order to deal with its implications" (p. 92). In the two instances where I observed students challenge the authority of their teachers, it appeared that students were aware of the implications when Gesellschaftlicht decision-making "overshadowed the traditional ideals of democracy." Their challenge was made in the Evergreen "spirit" of leadership that I described earlier in this chapter.

At times, students and teachers were involved in on-going controversy prompted by the simultaneous and conflicting demands of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft at Evergreen. The on-going struggles which did not lead to understanding or an articulation of common purpose, at times prompted school members to become frustrated and to call for what two staff respondents called "a clarification of the informal processes and structures within the school." One staff member reflected on how colleagues and students, by focusing on differences, sometimes lost sight of "how alike we all really are." She believed that on-going and unresolvable struggle was uncomfortable but positive because it necessarily involved all school members in the process of affirming "commonality" while recognizing diversity. Saul (1995), in arguing for a reawakening of the democratic spirit and a return to a "conscious civilization," spoke of the "virtue of uncertainty:"

> The virtue of uncertainty is not a comfortable idea, but then a citizen-based democracy is built upon participation, which is the very expression of permanent discomfort. . . . And the acceptance of permanent psychic discomfort is the acceptance of consciousness. (p. 195)

The Clashes Between Mechanistic and Ecological Thinking

The second set of tensions which I observed during the time I spent studying Evergreen were caused by the clashes between what Capra (1996) and others (Lambert et al., 1996; Saul, 1995; Wheatley, 1992) have called mechanistic and ecological thinking. Within what Capra (1996) described as the ecological paradigm, independence is an illusion (p. 295). Individuals within human communities exist in networks of interdependent and non-hierarchical relationships where thinking is "intuitive, synthetical, holistic, and non-linear," where "conservation, cooperation, quality, and partnership" are valued, and where power is "influence with others" (p. 10). Capra's (1995) ecological view and conceptualization of schools as "human communities" (p. 295) were resonant with what I observed at Evergreen school and heard from several respondents who believed that individuals were interconnected and "brought forth their world" through participation in community and through the constructivist processes of language.

Several of the 22 respondents expressed the belief that individuality, autonomy, and identity were integral to their relationships with other school members at Evergreen. For most, the "individual self" was an "interdependent and interconnected self," not a "separate, independent self." For some, however, continued attempts at independence led to frustration and what Capra called the "Cartesian anxiety" (p. 295) inherent in mechanistic thinking. The dominant mechanistic view, Lambert et al. (1996) contended, promotes the concept of schools as hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations shaped by thinking which is "rational, analytical, reductionist and linear," and governed by values of "expansion, competition, quantity, and domination" (Capra, 1996, p. 10). Evergreen school members holding a mechanistic view were easily identified. They often voiced their frustration through arguments that were reductionist and linear in a manner that was competitive and dominant. One student respondent, for example, was confused and upset that two of his friends had received "Ceased to Profit" letters and that they would no longer be attending Evergreen. His two friends, by all reports, had persisted in independent pursuits that contradicted the values expressed in the school philosophy and the "manifesto of principles." Through the CEASA process, a committee of elected peers and teachers made the decision that the two friends had "ceased to profit" from the Evergreen community experience. In the following passage taken from the student's interview and included in the case report, the student questioned what he perceived to be a contradiction in the CEASA decision:

> "How can they say 'We are a school about second chances' and then kick people out who have nowhere else to go?" These feelings of alienation were echoed by other students who found it difficult to accept that even within an alternative school, there were still those unable to function, those who remained outsiders.

In effect, this student's questioning serves to highlight the incommensurability of the mechanistic and ecological perspectives. Bellah (1985) made the following comments regarding the dilemma which resulted when the corporatist ideal of the "rugged individual" came in conflict with the humanistic view of the individual in society:

> The American dream is often a very private dream of being the star, the uniquely successful and admirable one, the one who stands out from the crowd of ordinary folk who don't know how. And since we have believed in the dream for a long time and worked very hard to make it come true, it is hard for us to give it up, even though it contradicts another dream we have--that of living in a society that would really be worth living in. (p. 285)

This dilemma to which Bellah referred was evident in the actions of some Evergreen school members and was attributable to the tension which existed between mechanistic and ecological values and thinking. Saul (1995), in confronting the values underpinning this pervasive dilemma within contemporary society, put forth the contention that the "rights" of individuals within society must be balanced with individual "obligation" to society:

> The individual's rights are guaranteed by law only to the extent that they are protected by the citizenry's exercise of their obligation to participate in society. Rights are a protection from society. But only by fulfilling their obligations to society can the individual give meaning to that protection.
> (p. 168)

The clashes between mechanistic and ecological world views extended beyond the Evergreen school setting to the larger educational arena as well. For example, Evergreen respondents recognized the challenge presented by the mechanistic thinking embodied in the government's proposal for restructuring Ontario secondary school education. There were fears that mechanistic thinking and bureaucratic proposals for reform would undermine and contradict the philosophical beliefs of the Evergreen community. In the case report, I wrote:

> With the growing emphasis on student achievement and the announcement of standardized testing, there was a sense among staff that their innovative approaches to curriculum and instruction might in the future be restricted. One staff member was perturbed by a recent discussion of student retention and credit granting ratios at a staff meeting. She feared that with the changes implicit in the Ontario Government's secondary education reform document, their small alternative community high school would soon be compared and judged with the larger collegiates.

With the growing fame and popularity of Evergreen Community High School, some respondents believed that the school was becoming "elitist," and that parents and students who normally would not select an alternative high school were now attracted to this choice through what they had read and heard in the media. Several school members believed that Evergreen was becoming "competitive" and was experiencing "growth" in the current era of choice within public education. Several respondents were suspicious of the mechanistic thinking and values that were presenting challenges to the holistic and collaborative values inherent in the history and traditions of the community school. In the case report, I have highlighted the growing tension between the two world views:

> "I would not like to see us become more elitist to the point that we try to filter out some students. I believe that one of the strengths of this school is its diversity. We have really good academic students, but we have other students who probably wouldn't survive in the mainstream schools. They can manage to finish high school here, and that's part of our success." Other staff members, however, felt that in these changing times of increased accountability in schools, it was good that the school was attracting strong academic students who would stay and complete their high school.

Merz and Furman (1997) critiqued what they called our "bureaucratic mind set" in public education and in doing so emphasized both the shortcomings of mechanistic thinking within schools that are communities, and the tendency of such hierarchical thinking to promote the establishment of a status quo. Their call for a more humanistic and holistic approach to problem solving within schools is a reaction to mechanistic thinking which they perceived to be currently dominating these processes in schools. It is also reminiscent of what Capra (1996) has described as ecological thinking:

> Our bureaucratic mind set has convinced us that the only way to get something done in the schools is to set a goal, develop a strategy, create a special function with a budget and a person in charge. In other words, we routinely and indiscriminately seek bureaucratic solutions to our problems, even problems of community. . . . Educators have to confront the conflict created between a highly structured bureaucracy and the ideal of democratic participation. School people must examine their role in this conflict. Perhaps it is time to begin creating a new mission for the schools in which they teach and model to children authentic ways to participate in multicultural democracy. Educators must examine the pervasiveness of the corporate mind set in education, which is, in the theory we have presented, antithetical to this goal. (Merz and Furman, 1997, pp. 92-93)

At Evergreen, ecological thinking and values comprised the dominant world view. It was a perspective that allowed school members to participate in the democratic processes of life while they challenged the mechanistic thinking that was dominant in the other communities to which they simultaneously belonged. It was a perspective, however, that was constantly put to the test by the "pervasiveness of the corporate mind set." The clashes that occasionally occurred between the ecological and mechanistic world views within Evergreen Community High School gave rise to tensions and an on-going struggle that did not culminate in consensus or affirmation of commonality of purpose for schooling.

In reaction to the what they perceived to be the "pervasiveness of the corporate mind set in education," Merz and Furman proposed a "social mission for schools:"

> Today we live in a multiplicity of settings, from neighborhoods, to nations, to the world as a whole. This requires citizens who can abide the ambiguity associated with the divided affiliations. From this it follows that the mission of the school must be: to teach students to live satisfying lives as participants in groups at various levels; to learn to live and work in groups in which differences are accepted and respected; to learn to form groups that provide satisfaction, identity, and security without destroying choices and opportunities for others. (p. 97)

Underlying the clashes between ecological and mechanistic thinking at Evergreen was the "ambiguity associated with the divided affiliations" of belonging to multiple communities which were simultaneously Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. The "social mission for schools" which Merz and Furman have proposed reflects ecological thinking and values similar to those which comprised the dominant perspective at Evergreen, and which characterized both the "sense of place" and "spirit" of leadership.

Interpretations of Leadership At Evergreen

Wheatley (1992) in her critique of conventional views of organization argued for the development of new conceptions of leadership. The following passage highlights the ecological thinking and values which she claimed must drive these original conceptualizations:

> I believe that we have only just begun the process of discovering and inventing the new organizational forms that will inhabit the twenty-first century. . . . we need the courage to let go of the old world, to relinquish most of what we have cherished, to abandon our interpretations about what does and doesn't work. As Einstein is often quoted as saying: No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew. . . . Our concept of organization is moving from the mechanistic creation that flourished in the age of bureaucracy. We have begun to speak in earnest of more fluid, organic structures, even of boundaryless organizations. We are beginning to recognize organizations as systems, construing them as "learning organizations" and crediting them with some type of self-renewing capacity. (pp. 5-13)

The founders of Evergreen Community High School embodied what Wheatley has called the "courage to let go of the old world." By creating a community school based on democratic ideals, the founders of Evergreen established the framework in which school members, over time, had continued to be self-organizing and self-renewing. Recently, Hargreaves (1997) elaborated on the conditions which must be present in order that there be hope for the creation of what he called "democratic community" in schools. Hope, he claimed, is an "active virtue" within schools that are democratic communities. Hope, he contended, was created through the reciprocal relationships among school members who are committed to loving, serving, learning, and empowering one another.

The conditions for hope outlined by Hargreaves are reminiscent of the critical attributes of the "sense of place," and the courage, reason, and sensual components of the "spirit of leadership" which I observed and heard about while studying Evergreen high school. The spirit of leadership and the sense of place within Evergreen together created the conditions for hope through which school members, by their participation in community and their practice of individuality, created a consciousness that allowed for the continuous process of "seeing the world anew." Critical factors underpinning and contributing to this unique co-evolution of the context and processes of leadership at Evergreen, the continuous creation of conditions for hope included the small size of the high school, the age and background of the Evergreen students, and the stability and impetus provided by the teacher leadership.

The Small Size of Evergreen Community High School

Boyer (1995), Sergiovanni (1995b) and others (Barker & Gump, 1964; Goodlad, 1984; Gregory & Smith, 1987; Heath, 1994; Lee & Smith, 1997; Raywid, 1998) have argued the case for small schools. Based on data collected for a major study on the impact of school size, Goodlad (1984) concluded that the smallest schools involved in his study were better at problem solving, were more intellectually oriented, and had greater student and parent satisfaction. "A good school," contended Boyer (1995), "should be small enough for everyone to know one another by name" (p. 35). Student respondents who had recently arrived at Evergreen from other high schools felt comfortable and welcome in what Hillary called the "friendly atmosphere" where "everyone knows everyone else." Parent respondents also attributed importance to the individualized attention which their children received within the high school of 120 students where people knew one another. Several staff respondents believed that the small size of the school was crucial for the operation of the democratic governance structures which required that all school members exercise their "equal right to rule" (Morgan, 1997, p. 157). Andy, the student teacher who had graduated from Evergreen several years before, expressed a concern for what he believed was a loss of "community" due to the increasing size of the student population within the school. Quoting Aristotle, Andy explained why he believed the current student population of 120 was too big. "An ideal democracy," he claimed, "is built on consensual decision making and comprises 100 or fewer citizens." Other staff members expressed concern over changes in government funding which necessitated an increase in the average class size and overall student enrollment within the school. The small school size, in the minds of many school members, was critical to maintaining the unique sense of democratic community within Evergreen.

One of the advantages of small schools, claimed Kleinfield, is that they create "undermanned settings" where people must collaborate in order to meet the demands which usually fall to the administrators and other designated leaders within a school. Kleinfield's contention was that in such undermanned settings, more is asked of everyone; all school members feel needed and are needed in order to operate the school (cited in Sergiovanni, 1995b, p. 49). With no principal on site and no designated guidance counselors within the school, the Evergreen teachers, students, and parents collaborated in the decision making and day-to-day administration of the school. At Evergreen where governance was shared through school meetings, staff meetings, Board of Director meetings, and CEASA, school members experienced a feeling of interdependence and trust because they "needed" each other in order to operate and accomplish the Gesellschaft goals of the school community.

The Age and Background of the Evergreen Students

Because the school program included grades 10 through 12 courses as well as Ontario Academic Credit courses, but no grade nine, all of the Evergreen students had previous experience in other high schools. The Evergreen students were on average between 16 and 17 years old which was older than the average student within the larger secondary schools from which they had come. This combination of factors, previous high school experience, and the older student body, gave rise to an atmosphere that was quite different from what I had experienced in other high schools where I had previously worked and conducted research. Over the time I spent studying the school, I heard students and staff speak reflectively and insightfully about their previous experiences and their reasons for selecting Evergreen Community High School. Students who had chosen to come to Evergreen high school after having attended other schools within the public school system were aware of the distinct school culture and made a conscious commitment to participate in the governance of the school, as well as to their own education and learning. They understood and accepted the values and purposes embodied in the school philosophy statement, the THREE RULES, and Codes of Behavior. Being older on average, having experienced other high schools, and having had to make a reasoned choice in accepting the philosophy and rules of Evergreen, these students demonstrated a commitment to the stated purposes of the school and to each other. Shannon, for example, remarked, "Everyone at Evergreen has come here because they have had a difficult time at other schools. We all feel a bond and get along because of that." Gregory and Smith (1987), through their extensive research of small high schools, found that within all of the schools which they studied there was a sense of community characterized by a distinctive school culture, an identifiable sense of purpose, and an overall commitment to learning and to each other on the part of the students (p. 26). The strong bond among the students whom I described in the case report as "refugees from the mainstream" contributed to the sense of community, the Gemeinschaft within Evergreen Community High School.

Although the students came from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, most had spent their lives in the Metropolitan Toronto area. Several students lived on their own and were independent of their families. Several lived within non-traditional families. After spending a considerable amount of time observing and speaking with these young people, what I found striking was the breadth of experience and sophistication among these urban students. David Elkind (1995) described what he perceived to be the relationship between the changing postmodern urban society and the school:

> These postmodern themes of difference, particularity, and irregularity are increasingly transforming science, the arts, and industry. They have also transformed the family and, increasingly, are transforming that mirror of the family, the school. We need to look at the shift from the modern nuclear family to the postmodern permeable family to see how this shift is being echoed in our schools. (p. 10)

Many of the students to whom I spoke came from what Elkind has called the "permeable family," where the traditional sentiments of romantic love, maternal love, and stable family life have given way to consensual love, shared parenting, and urbanity (p. 12). "Adolescents today," claimed Elkind, "are seen as sophisticated, as quite knowledgeable about drugs, sex, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, and modern technology. This new perception is again reflected in media portrayals of teenagers who consider themselves equal to their parents in decision making competence" (p. 13). Elkind in concluding his article *School and Family in the Postmodern World* commented:

> I have tried to demonstrate how the schools have already undergone a major transformation--independent of any conscious reform agenda--simply in response to changes in the society and in the family. . . . Very simply, the schools in postmodern times have continued the historical trend of gradually assuming parental functions. . . . In addition, our schools today are providing much more in the way of child care, education for children with special needs, child support services, sex education, drug education, values education, and parent education than they did in the modern era. (p. 14)

Evergreen Community High School was a haven for postmodern adolescents who found it difficult to fit into the mainstream high schools which were products of modern thinking and mirrors of the nuclear family. The Evergreen students considered themselves equal to their parents and their teachers in decision making competence. In choosing to attend Evergreen, these students wanted an education that went beyond standardized curriculum and university preparation. Many sought a safe haven within their urban world where differences and individual expression were honored within relationships built on equality and mutual respect. These students, like the founders of Evergreen Community High School, were compelled to seek out alternatives where they felt supported in questioning the status quo and in the individual pursuit of making sense of a society that was undergoing dramatic change.

Stability and Impetus Provided by the Teacher Leadership

Lambert et al. (1996) put forth the contention that staff culture is the single most important element in promoting flexibility within schools and improved student learning. Several respondents believed that the Evergreen staff members had selected to teach at the alternative secondary school because they, like their students, were seeking an alternative within the mainstream where differences and individual expression were honored within relationships built on equality and mutual respect. Four of the eight had been staff members of Evergreen for more than 15 years; three of the remaining four had been teachers within the school for more than five years. The long-term membership of seven of the eight staff members provided stability and credibility for the community understandings of Evergreen. Over time, bonds had developed between and among this group of staff members who had shared a wide variety of personal and professional experiences.

Staff culture, Lambert et al. argued, is either "stuck" or "moving" and is created through experiences that take place over time (p. 51). Citing several research studies of staff culture in schools, Lambert et al. explained that a moving "staff culture supports in-depth collaboration, a willingness to confront old assumptions, and an openness to discuss hard issues" which in turn leads to "good conditions for student engagement and learning in school" (p. 52). Teachers who are part of a moving staff culture, these authors believed, consider themselves learners and enter into reciprocal processes of sense making with colleagues as well as students:

> As teachers gain courage to collaborate in the construction of new learning with their students, they can envision collaborating with colleagues in the same way. Collegial interaction is possible only in a culture of mutual respect and care for the other. It is not feasible in authoritarian or hierarchical structures. (p. 97)

At Evergreen, the absence of hierarchical roles and structures was most apparent during the staff meetings when the teachers collaborated on setting the agenda, "confronting old assumptions," and "discussing the hard issues." All teacher respondents commented on the necessity of trust and mutual respect during these interactions. In Gail's opinion, it was within the collegial relationships built on mutual respect and equality that she experienced the freedom and trust which she enjoyed as a teacher at Evergreen, a "creator of curriculum." By comparing her current teaching situation to what she had experienced within the large secondary school where she had previously taught, Gail emphasized the importance of a "moving" staff culture. Four of the long time staff members stated that over the years that they had worked at Evergreen, life within the school was constantly changing and that they had "never been bored." In the minds of these respondents, constant change and the fluid staff culture were positive.

In their discussion of the factors which promote staff cultures which are "moving," Lambert et al. cited the importance of teacher education and professional development (p. 118). At Evergreen, the students viewed their teachers as "individuals with their own strengths and issues." Students and parents referred to "the teachers" collectively when they wished to give credit for the school's strong academic reputation and the overall success of the school. In the case report, I highlighted the importance of each teacher's education and commitment to the teaching profession:

> This group of teachers modeled their passion for learning and ideas. All seven teachers, for example, had more than one university degree. Five had Master's degrees in a wide range of disciplines within the Sciences and the Humanities. Arnold had just completed his Doctorate in Media and Cultural Studies at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto. During the interviews with the seven teachers I learned that each "was passionate about their teaching," and most had "always wanted to teach." Several made the claim that they had been "born to be a teacher." Even given all of the years of experience and the accumulation of university degrees, there was still a sense of that original passion that had drawn these individuals into teaching and learning with young people.

This well-educated and highly professional group of Evergreen teachers provided the sustained impetus for learning within Evergreen school. Arnold summed up what I observed to be the cumulative effect of a moving staff culture which had developed over time when he stated:

> "I think that when the students see how passionate we are about what we are teaching, how much we really are caught up in ideas, that energy is in some way communicated to them. It's as if they catch fire."

Lambert et al. in expressing their constructivist view of leadership put forth the contention that:

> Teaching is an act of leadership, requiring an understanding of one's role, a commitment to empower all learners, the skills of facilitation, and the willingness to inquire about and reflect on one's own learning. Teaching and learning are highly relational, interactive, and grounded in the lives of the participants. Constructivist leaders are teachers. . . . The historic paradigm of stratified leadership is with us still. And the creation of new or different metaphors for leadership remains the challenge before us. How we choose to practice leadership must relate directly to how we teach . . . . we must start with a vision of what we want to occur in classrooms and schools, and then begin to question which existing structures support or facilitate that image and which must be altered. (pp. 120-121)

At Evergreen, there was no "stratified leadership structure." With its tradition of non-hierarchical direct democracy, Evergreen Community High School offered a "different metaphor for leadership" where teachers, students, and parents participated in making sense of the world and setting common purposes for school. Paulo Freire (1994) would call Evergreen a "site of hope and possibility" because of the willingness of school members to become involved in the struggle which he believed to be inherent in all democratic communities. In his recent work, Freire outlined the critical importance of hope within society and within the pedagogy of its schools:

> Without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle. But without the struggle, hope, as an ontological need, dissipates, loses its bearings, and turns into hopelessness. And hopelessness can become tragic despair. Hence the need for a kind of education in hope. Hope, as it happens, is so important for our existence, individual and social, that we must take every care not to experience it in a mistaken form, and thereby allow it to slip toward hopelessness and despair. Hopelessness and despair are both the consequence and the cause of inaction or immobilism. (p. 9)

The spirit of leadership at Evergreen, characterized by the interplay of reason, courage and passion, and the sensual had, over time, given rise to the "sense of place" to which all staff respondents referred. The spirit of leadership and the sense of place within Evergreen together created the conditions for hope through which school members, by their participation in community and their practice of individuality, created a consciousness that allowed for the continuous process of "seeing the world anew."

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FINAL COMMENTS

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate how leadership was experienced and understood by students, parents, and staff members in two secondary schools that have a reputation for success. A secondary purpose was to examine how leadership and culture were intertwined within each school. The specific research questions addressed through this study were: (1) How do the students, parents, and staff members within selected secondary schools with a reputation for success perceive the formal organization of the school? (2) How do the students, parents, and staff members within these selected secondary schools perceive the school culture? (3) How do the students, parents, and staff members perceive and experience "routine" (i.e., day-to-day) activities within the school?
(4) How do the students, parents, and staff members perceive and experience "non-routine" occurrences (i.e., issues and innovations) within the school?

This investigation was conducted using a collective case study approach, premised on the belief that an understanding of the inter-relationship among individuals' perceptions within each school site was instrumental in addressing the research questions and the stated purpose of the study. Stake (1994) elaborated on the nature of collective case study which is instrumental:

> Ultimately we may be more interested in a phenomenon or a population of cases than in the individual case. We may simultaneously carry on more than one case study, but each case study is a concentrated inquiry into a single case. . . . We may call this a collective case study. It is not the study of a collective but instrumental study extended to several cases. (p. 237)

This chapter has two chief purposes. The first is to address the specific research questions by summarizing the findings and interpretations presented in Chapters 4 through 7. I have provided this summary in order to contextualize the conclusions and working hypotheses which relate to the overall purpose of this study. Some may not find it necessary to read these summaries in their entirety before going on to the presentation of conclusions and working hypotheses. The second purpose of this chapter is to offer recommendations for further research and practice as well as some final comments on secondary school leadership.

The summary of findings and conclusions which follow are supported by the data analysis and interpretations reported in earlier chapters, but are not meant to be read as universal truths explicated in the form of propositional generalizations. Because constructivists accept that "human actions are seldom simply caused and usually not caused in ways that can be discovered," such generalizations are not possible (Stake, 1995, p. 39). Instead, the goal of the constructivist researcher is to support reader interpretation by developing "an ideographic body of knowledge in the form of 'working hypotheses' that describe" the phenomenon in a particular setting (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 38). In a similar vein, Stake elaborated on how conclusions are constructed from instrumental case study:

> Readers examining instrumental case studies are shown how the phenomenon exists within a particular case. . . . Generalizations from differences between any two cases are much less to be trusted than generalizations from one. Illustration as to how the phenomenon occurs in the circumstances of the particular exemplar can be valued and trustworthy knowledge. (1994, p. 242)

It is in this spirit that the findings and conclusions are presented. They are offered as "illustrations" of how leadership was experienced and understood at a particular point in time by individuals in each of the secondary schools involved in this study. Recommendations for further research and practice are based on the findings and conclusions in each case. This chapter concludes with final comments on secondary school leadership which are based on similar themes that emerged from the two case studies.

Addressing the Specific Research Questions

Much of what can be said about the four specific research questions was implicitly or explicitly stated in previous chapters. In Chapters 4 and 6, for example, key aspects of the inter-relationships among respondents' perceptions in each school site were presented in a narrative format under the headings: "School as Community;" "Diversity in Community;" "Students . . . ;" "Staff Members . . . ;" "Tensions;" "Measuring Success;" and "Celebrating Community." These headings correspond to the categories which emerged from preliminary analysis of the data. This analysis was undertaken within the conceptual framework described in Chapter 2 and was conducted after the data collection from both school sites had been completed

In Chapters 5 and 7, interpretations of leadership in each school site were presented based on analysis conducted after the case study reports had been written. This analysis was also undertaken within the conceptual framework which was influenced by Lambert et al.'s definition of constructivist leadership. These interpretations were organized under the headings: "The Context of Leadership;" "The Processes of Leadership;" "The Tensions Underlying the Context and Processes of Leadership," and "Interpretations of Leadership." These headings correspond to the overarching themes that emerged from preliminary analysis of the two case study reports in Chapters 4 and 6.

In the following section, presented under the headings "Leadership in Riverview School" and "Leadership in Evergreen Community High School," are: (1) summaries of the findings and interpretations presented in Chapters 4 through 7, (2) conclusions which relate to the specific research questions and overall purpose of this study. These conclusions are stated in the form of working hypotheses, (3) recommendations for further research and practice.

Leadership in Riverview School

In my initial search for patterns and consistencies in the data (Stake, 1995, p. 78) collected over the time spent studying Riverview School, I focused on the inter-relationship among the perceptions of the eight student, two parent, and nine staff respondents. The following is a summary of the findings which emerged from that analysis. These findings have been organized under headings which correspond to the four specific research questions and have been grouped according to student, staff, and parent responses.

Perceptions of the Formal School Organization

The dominant bureaucratic view of schools, claimed Lee, Bryk and Smith (1993), depicts secondary schools as

> 'formal organizations' characterized by a functional division of adult labor into specialized tasks; teaching roles are defined by subject matter and types of students; an emphasis on social interactions that are rule governed, are affectively neutral, and have limited individual discretion; and a form of authority that is attached to the role within the organization rather than to the person occupying the role. (p. 173)

Riverview student respondents viewed the formal aspects of school organization as being supportive of their learning. All student respondents believed that the school program had been tailored to meet the needs of students; several students explained this belief by referring specifically to the scheduling of course offerings, small class sizes, and opportunities for individualized programming and instruction. The eight student respondents viewed their teachers as having more authority than friends and peers, but less than parents. All students perceived the vice principal and principal to be central "authority figures" in such matters as scheduling of courses, discipline, and dealing with issues affecting the overall operation of the school (i.e., occasional theft of lunches from lockers).

Respect was cited by all students as the fundamental "rule" guiding human activity within the school. Respect was interpreted in different ways by the students; the two grade 10 and two grade 11 respondents viewed the "respect rule" as being prescriptive in the way that they believed it delineated between appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. The four grade 12 students explained respect as a personal quality with more than one interpretation. Although two students claimed some of the other "rules" were unnecessary (i.e., student parking restrictions, no smoking on school grounds), all perceived that rules, all of which were unwritten, were fairly administered by the teachers, vice principal, and principal.

All teaching and support staff members expressed the view that in their work they felt autonomous, supported, and respected by colleagues and principals. Staff members viewed work performance as an individual professional responsibility. All teachers viewed individual student differences as central to their lesson planning and delivery of curriculum. All teachers believed that every student should feel successful in his or her learning. Three teachers believed that the diversity within the student population and the constantly changing curricula gave rise to their own need to be constantly innovating in their teaching. All teachers viewed teaching as challenging; all believed that they and colleagues "did their best" in their teaching. None perceived there to be "pressure" from colleagues or principals to do "better" or "more;" the pressure to "do their best," claimed two teachers, was intrinsic. The principal believed that the teachers were "the people who made the school work" because of their professional commitment to student learning and achievement.

Without exception, teachers and support staff members viewed their relationships with students to be congenial, and their relationships with peers to be collegial. All staff members viewed the vice principal and principal as chief managers and authority figures in matters that concerned the overall operation of the school (i.e., decisions regarding: allocation of resources, discipline, communication with parents and community). Without exception, staff saw the two principals as being professional, fair, open-minded, and competent in performing their administrative functions (i.e., decisions regarding: allocation of resources, discipline, communication with parents and community).

Both parent respondents found the school staff and principal to be receptive to school and classroom visitations by parents, regardless of the day or time. Parents believed the principal to be the chief authority figure and problem-solver within the school. Both of these parents viewed parental support for student learning and school activities to be important and expected, but outside curricular and extra-curricular activities which involved school staff and students. Both parents believed that the positive reputation of the school within the community was linked to the centrality of learning within the school, as well as to the recent history of high student achievement

Perceptions of The School Culture

Secondary school organization viewed from a cultural perspective, claimed Lee, Bryk and Smith (1993), depicts schools as "communal," or:

> 'small societies,' organizations that emphasize informal and enduring social relationships and are driven by a common ethos. A consequence of a communal organization is that the role of adults is diffuse and the division of labor is minimal. (p. 173)

The four grade 12 respondents who had attended the school since grade one believed that the organization of the school had become less formal over time. These students and others viewed the relaxing of formal structures (i.e., no written rules, no written code of conduct) as positive. All student respondents claimed to experience a sense of "freedom" which they perceived to be bound, but not restricted, by the fundamental tenet of respect. Students viewed all adults and peers, regardless of age or grade differences, as worthy of respect. All students believed it was important to "know everyone" and "be known by everyone" within the small high school. Many believed that respectful relationships were the most important facet of the culture of Riverview School where "everybody knew everything about everybody else." There was considerable importance attributed to the repetition of stories about events going on within the school and the actions of various school members. Students believed it was important to "know what was going on" within the school.

Students used the terms "guides," "counselors," and "coaches" on more than one occasion to describe teachers' roles in teacher-student relationships. Most students viewed the principal and vice principal as "teachers first." All student respondents attributed their success in the academic and extra-curricular programs to the teachers. From the students' perspectives, teachers did not force people to learn, but instead made students "want to learn" by dwelling on what students did well and not focusing on the bad.

All student respondents made reference to the "different groups" of students within the school; all viewed differences as acceptable and normal, as long as there was respect between and among groups. Students who had been required to withdraw from the school, were viewed by other students as "deserving" of such action. All perceived that the different groups "got along" without necessarily being "friends." Most students viewed participation in extra-curricular activities as an integral part of their school program. Several students perceived participation in the sports program to be as prestigious as academic achievement within the school. Even though these same students did not view themselves or peers as "competitive athletes," they participated because they felt encouraged to try.

Long time staff members also perceived that the organization of the school had become less formal over time. This, in the view of these individuals, was positive. Relationships with the principal were described by staff members as "informal" and "relaxed." In the absence of written policies and procedures, teachers perceived collaborative problem-solving to be an on-going, emergent, and inherent part of their work with colleagues and students. The newest staff member believed that the positive interactions focused on problem-solving comprised the distinguishing characteristic of the Riverview school culture. Conversations between and among staff and students, he pointed out, always began with a question and ended with "words of encouragement or humor."

The newest staff member and three other teachers referred specifically to what they perceived to be a "human energy" within school. They attributed the energizing school environment to the positive interactions between and among students and adults within the school. Most staff members viewed students as equals and worthy of respect. The extensive extra-curricular program, including sports, was viewed by all staff as being important for student development, and central to the development of positive teacher-student relationships. Most teachers viewed their own involvement in the extra-curricular program as being worthy of the extra commitment of time that was required.

Parents believed that Riverview School was a "good" place for their children, as they were "happy," supported by teachers, and enjoyed close knit relationships with peers. Both parents stated that the respectful relationships between and among students and teachers were critical to the success of their children. Parents believed that the school's reputation for success was attributable to the work and efforts of the teachers, vice principal, and principal.

The opening episode, "The Bonding Walk," and closing vignette, "Beating Evansdale," were included in the case study report on Riverview School because both events were mentioned repeatedly by staff, parents, and students. Several respondents referred to these events in order to illustrate what they perceived to be the centrality of respectful relationships, and the "energizing" impact of activities which involved most or all of school population. Several adults used the word "community" when describing these activities. Student respondents used the phrase "the whole school" when they described these activities.

Perceptions of Routine Activities

The activities which students viewed as "routine" were participation in the curricular and extra-curricular programs and socializing with friends. Within these routine activities, however, students believed there was variety and that they had choices. Students saw their teachers as guides, counselors, and coaches in the classroom and extra-curricular activities. No student viewed these routine activities of school as boring. Without exception, students credited their teachers and principals for providing variety and choice in curricular and extra-curricular activities. All students, including those who had had difficulty adjusting to routine activities in other schools, viewed their curricular and extra-curricular experiences at Riverview School to be interesting and worthwhile. Students believed doing homework, learning, and being successful at school were their responsibilities. No student blamed his or her failure or disappointment on school staff or peers.

All students viewed socializing which occurred in areas such as the back steps, gymnasium, library, and cafe to be routine encounters that were student centered and student initiated. The socializing that occurred in these areas was viewed by all students as equally important to the curricular and extra-curricular activities they routinely experienced.

All eight teacher respondents viewed classroom and extra-curricular activities as comprising the chief routines of school. Teachers believed student learning and achievement were the most important aspects of schooling. All teachers viewed socializing as an important facet of the students' daily experience. All named the back steps, upper hallway, library, and cafe as areas where students interacted without teacher supervision.

The principal and vice principal believed their chief responsibility as school administrators was to support the curricular and extra-curricular experiences of the diverse student population. Both viewed student learning and achievement as being the central purposes of schooling, but recognized that students learned and achieved in a variety of ways. Both principals viewed student freedom and choice in matters concerning their socializing to be an important part of the students' school experience.

Both parents viewed social interactions with peers and friends, and extra-curricular activities to be important aspects of their children's schooling, but expressed the belief that academic learning and achievement were the most important activities comprising their children's schooling.

Perceptions of "Non-Routine" Activities

Change in the form of innovation was viewed as being positive by students, parents, and staff members. Several long time staff members believed that this view of innovation had originated with the school evaluation which had occurred shortly after the arrival of the principal 11 years before. The introduction of the new fine arts program, for example, was a change which all students perceived to be positive. All eight student respondents had become involved in music, drama, or art since the introduction of the program. Most students viewed newcomers as positive additions to the growing diversity in the school population.

Students claimed negative occurrences (i.e., such as theft of lunches from lockers, and students who broke the rules) did not happen very often. Grade 10 and 11 students perceived the principal to be the central "authority figure" in dealing with such matters and issues. The four grade 12 students perceived such matters to be "everyone's concern" and not just the principal's. All eight student respondents viewed those who had not, in their minds, demonstrated respectful attitudes towards others and property to be deserving of discipline.

Most teachers viewed changes within curriculum and school program as "part of the job" and positive. Again, several claimed that such changes were energizing. All staff were aware of the growing diversity within the student population; all believed that the addition of new students and new programs was positive. Teachers viewed such issues as theft of lunches, and inappropriate student behaviors as being part of the "rhythms" of the school; all perceived the principal to be the central "authority figure" in dealing with such matters.

Parents did not believe it was the parents' role to become involved in decisions concerning school programming or the operation of the school (i.e., school discipline). Both parent respondents viewed the principals and teachers as competent problem-solvers in such matters.

Summary

"Belief systems, world views, and personal schemas that are coherent," Lambert and her colleagues argued, "require continually constructed meaning within the context of shared and created experiences" (1995, p. 43). In my search for patterns in the data collected at Riverview School, I noted multiple instances of what Lambert et al. have termed "coherence" among the perceptions of student, parent, and staff respondents.

Major findings from this analysis of the data included:

1. Respondents' recognition of, and appreciation for, the informal and relaxed environment in the school where rules were unwritten and the most important tenet was "respect."
2. The high value respondents placed on being a member of the school and participating in curricular and extra-curricular school activities.
3. Respondents' belief that this relaxed atmosphere contributed to: the respectful relationships between and among adolescents and adults, the high levels of trust between and among adults and adolescents, the sense of freedom experienced by students, the autonomy experienced by staff, the sense of equality experienced by the students, the centrality of student learning, the innovative curricular and extra-curricular programming, and student-centered and student-initiated social activities.
4. Respondents' perceptions that tensions within the school and relationships were caused by individuals whose actions indicated values that differed from the majority. This was interpreted by all staff and student respondents as "lack of respect" and/or "betrayal of trust." Staff respondents perceived that regulations and mandates imposed by authorities outside of the school occasionally caused tensions (i.e., site-based management).

5. All respondents perceived "whole school" activities (i.e., Bonding Walk, sporting activities) to be important for building cohesiveness and school spirit. Several adult respondents called these events "community" activities.
6. Several respondents referred to what they perceived to be "energy" emanating from human interactions going on within the school.
7. The major difference of perceptions and opinions was noted between the parent group, and the staff and student groups. Parents' perceptions of the formal organization and culture of the school revealed an understanding which differed from staff and student perceptions. Parents perceived themselves to be largely outside of the school culture. Parents perceived that the school was organized primarily along bureaucratic lines and that the principals and, to a lesser degree, the teachers were "in charge."

Summary of Interpretations of Leadership Included in Chapter 5

The case study report on Riverview School found in Chapter 4 was constructed based on the findings summarized above. Chapter 5 was devoted to the interpretation of leadership at Riverview School and was based on analysis of the case study report. Within the conceptual framework, the development of which was influenced by Lambert et al.'s (1995) definition of leadership (p. 29), the context and processes of leadership, as well as the tensions underlying the context and processes were discussed. Following is a summary of the interpretations of leadership included in Chapter 5.

In describing different perspectives on school organization, Lee, Bryk and Smith (1993) used a continuum that was bound on one end by the "formal/bureaucratic" perspective and on the other by the "cultural/communal" perspective. This is a useful construct to illustrate the Riverview respondents' perceptions of their school and for that reason was cited in the above summary under "Perceptions of Formal Organization," and "Perceptions of School Culture." Several long time respondents from the student and staff groups believed that Riverview School had evolved, over time, from being organized according to bureaucratic roles and functions to being organized primarily around relationships built on respect. The managerially loose and culturally tight organization of Riverview School became the context in which adults and adolescents had, over time, "established the pattern" for:

the development of respectful relationships, learning and achievement, success, and appreciation of diversity.

The need for bureaucratic authority diminished as the school became more communal. Bureaucratic authority remained centered in the principalship and occasionally shifted to the teaching staff (i.e., discipline and communication with parents). Other kinds of authority, including personal authority over teaching and learning, were distributed through the network of relationships between and among adults and adolescents. Differences based on formal roles also diminished. Progressively, relationships between and among adolescents and adults became based on mutual respect and trust, and were often characterized by equality and reciprocity. Within the communal context, individuals became progressively more self-managing and self-directed. Respondents believed that, over time, there was an increase in the sense of autonomy and freedom experienced by both adults and adolescents. This sense of freedom and autonomy was accompanied by the impression that the school culture had become more "energized" and was constantly changing.

The respectful and trusting relationships and school culture of continuous change provided the context in which the processes of leadership occurred. Exchanges between and among school members were most often reciprocal and characterized by conversations, questioning, humor, and laughter. Teachers and students were frequently on "equal footing" as they became involved in the exchanges focused on making sense of individual and collective experiences going on inside and outside of the classrooms. School activities, including sporting events and events like the "bonding walk," were considered important contexts for interacting with others in meaningful ways. Exchanges that occurred during the school activities were most often focused on collective sense-making.

Underlying the context which was continuously being shaped by the interactions of adults and adolescents, were tensions which evolved out of what many believed were certain individuals' needs to act in ways that were disrespectful to others (i.e., theft of lunches). As well, the bureaucratic and cultural goals of schooling occasionally clashed (i.e., government directive requiring schools to publish student achievement on standardized examinations).

Underpinning and contributing to the co-evolution of the context and processes of leadership at Riverview were factors which included: the small size of the high school, the stability of the student population within the rural community served by the school, the consistency provided by the same individual in the principalship over a period of 11 years, the high degree of staff professionalism, and the high value placed on learning, achievement, and success.

Conclusions, Working Hypotheses and Recommendations

At the outset, I wish to remind the reader that the purpose of including the following conclusions and working hypotheses is not to provide propositional generalizations about leadership. Rather, they are intended to provide a description of the leadership phenomenon as it was experienced by a group of Riverview staff, students, and parents at a particular point in time. Recommendations for further research and practice have been embedded in the following discussion.

The most general working hypothesis that can be supported by these findings and interpretations is that Riverview students and staff regularly experienced the phenomenon that Lambert et al. have defined as constructivist leadership: "the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling" (1995, p. 29). Findings indicate that staff and students: (a) regularly participated in activities which within Lambert et al.'s framework are called "reciprocal processes;" (b) were enabled to construct meanings about lived experiences and events through these reciprocal processes; (c) experienced these reciprocal processes within the context of respectful relationships; (d) affirmed their common purpose and focus on learning, achievement, and success through these processes.

Staff and students regularly experienced, understood, and could communicate their understanding of the phenomenon as described in the preceding. They did not, however, call the phenomenon "leadership." Stated as a more specific working hypothesis:

> Staff and students experience leadership as the reciprocal processes of knowledge construction which occur within the context of respectful relationships when participants are conjointly focused on understanding and learning. Staff and students have similar understandings of the nature of the phenomenon. They do not, however, identify the phenomenon as "leadership."

This working hypothesis raises a question that could form the basis for further research. An investigation of how staff and students in secondary schools conceptualize leadership might generate new conceptions of the leadership phenomenon, a need that has been identified in the literature (Gaskell, 1995; Lambert et al., 1995; Lightfoot, 1983; Sergiovanni, 1996; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Wilson & Corcoran, 1988). As well, an investigation of this nature could provide practical information for school and school district administrators looking for models of effective secondary school leadership.

When describing the phenomenon outlined in the above working hypothesis, staff used organizational terms like "community" and "family." Students used terms like "the whole school" and "everybody." This finding suggests that there is a relationship between how staff and students viewed the school organization and the experience of the leadership phenomenon as described in the above. Findings summarized in the preceding section suggest that the predominant view of organization among the student and staff respondents can most closely be described in cultural terms, similar to what Lee, Bryk and Smith (1993) have called "communal organization:"

> small societies, organizations that emphasize informal and enduring social relationships and are driven by a common ethos. A consequence of a communal organization is that the role of adults is diffuse and the division of labor is minimal. (p. 173)

From this finding emerges another specific working hypothesis:

> Staff and students experience leadership within the context of respectful relationships which are enduring, informal, and communal in nature.

This working hypothesis raises two possible questions for further study. In the above "Summary of Interpretations of Leadership from Chapter 5," the small size of the high school was described as a factor underpinning and contributing to the co-evolution of the context and processes of leadership at Riverview. An investigation of how leadership is experienced and understood by students, staff, and parents within a larger secondary school might yield findings that could be useful in the on-going study of the impact of "school size" (Barker & Gump, 1964; Lee, Smerdon, McMahon & Curtis, 1997; Lee & Smith, 1997; Oxley, 1997; Raywid, 1997, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1995b).

The stability of the student population within the rural community served by the school was another important factor. Findings from an investigation of the nature of relationships within rural secondary schools could be informative for researchers currently studying "community" in secondary schools (Driscoll, 1990; Furman, 1997; Gregory & Smith, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1994a, 1994b; Suddards, 1997).

A more general working hypothesis that can be supported by the findings and interpretations is that Riverview parents did not experience and understand the leadership phenomenon in the way described above. Instead, the findings suggest that the parents experienced and understood leadership at Riverview School to be like what Sergiovanni has described as "moral leadership." Moral leadership, as described by Sergiovanni, occurs when the head (i.e., school leader's perception of reality) is shaped by the heart (i.e., school leader's values and beliefs) and drives the hand (i.e., school leader's decisions, actions and behaviors); "in turn, reflections on decisions and actions affirm or reshape the heart and the head" (pp. 7-8).

Findings indicate that parents experienced leadership through their contacts with the school principal. Based on their experiences, these parents understood leadership as the principal's "decisions, actions and behaviors," which they believed were shaped by his respect for differences among students and his efforts to create an inclusive learning environment. Both parents had known the school principal over time. Their knowledge of leadership at Riverview was based on numerous experiences. Stated as a specific working hypothesis:

> Parents experience leadership as the principal's decisions, actions and behaviors which are shaped by his respect for differences and belief that everyone can learn, achieve, and succeed.

Numerous studies have been conducted on secondary school principals, but few to my knowledge, have adopted a definition of moral leadership for the theoretical framework. An investigation of secondary school leadership from the perspective, as described by Sergiovanni as, "moral leadership" (1992),could be informative during this era of school reform where researchers, practitioners and policy-makers are considering models of educational leadership that have the potential of restoring lost confidence in public education. A study of this nature could be informative for those who are conducting research on the shared governance models of leadership that have been popularized by current reform initiatives (Barth, 1990; Blase & Blase, 1997; Glickman, 1993; Schlechty, 1990).

The above working hypothesis raises the question about the role of parents in school leadership. Further research on parents' perceptions of secondary school leadership could inform policy-makers and practitioners who, through the design and implementation of school based management, assume that parents are knowledgeable about the context and processes of secondary school leadership.

Leadership in Evergreen Community High School

In my initial search for patterns and consistencies in the data collected over the time spent studying Evergreen Community High School, I focused on the interrelationship among the perceptions of the ten student, ten staff, and two parent respondents. The following is a summary of the findings which emerged from that analysis. These findings have been organized under headings which correspond to the four specific research questions, and have been grouped according to student, staff, and parent responses.

Perceptions of the Formal School Organization

All respondents perceived that inherent in the formal organization of Evergreen were characteristics that were Gesellschaft in nature. Merz and Furman (1997), referring to Tonnies' theory of community, elaborated on communities that are gesellschaftlicht:

> These relationships are chosen by the individuals strategically to accomplish some end, or reciprocity, . . . In many ways, the modern bureaucracy, with its rules, layers of authority, and institutionalized purpose, is the quintessential Gesellschaft. The notion of mutual advantage is important to Gesellschaft, and techniques of bargaining and negotiation are gesellschaftlicht tools. A common definition of community today involves a group with common values that comes together to accomplish a common goal (e.g., Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Generally the values under discussion relate only to the goal and how it is to be accomplished. This would be a Gesellschaft, in Tonnies' schema, not a Gemeinschaft, because it hinges on a consciously selected goal. (pp. 14-15)

All student respondents believed that they had "chosen" to come to Evergreen. Several of the respondents cited "freedom," the relaxed atmosphere, and the "academic reputation" of Evergreen as reasons for making their decision. All nine student respondents perceived their goals and experiences at Evergreen to be resonant with the mission statement included in the school handbook; all could paraphrase key aspects: "community involvement" and "strong support for individual expression" within the parameters of school rules and regulations. Most students viewed the CEASA admission procedure as fair; they all referred to this common experience as "being CEASAed." Eight out of nine students perceived the THREE RULES and codes of behavior to be reasonable. That all students could recite or paraphrase the THREE

RULES and codes of behavior suggested that considerable importance was attributed to these conditions for membership in the Evergreen community. Most students believed that the rules, codes of behavior, and CEASA procedure were interpreted differently depending on the individual and circumstances. Most perceived the broad application of rules and procedures to be reasonable, fair, and in keeping with the stated mission of the school of respecting diversity and supporting individual expression. One student believed that the CEASA process was not fair. This student perceived that the student membership on the CEASA was not representative. None of the other students shared his perception.

Students perceived "community involvement" to mean participation in the compulsory Outreach Program and in activities pertaining to the overall governance of the school (i.e., consensual decision making, school meetings, Board of Directors, CEASA). One of the student respondents was an elected representative on CEASA. Three of the eight other students aspired to be elected by peers to serve on CEASA. Students believed that authority in these matters was shared equally between and among all school members (i.e., teachers, students, parents) represented on the governing bodies. Teachers and students were perceived by students to be "on equal footing." Students believed that because adults and adolescents went by first names, there were no differences; people were equals. Students viewed their representation on CEASA and the Board of Directors as important examples of the shared and equal authority. Voting on course selection and timetable was also perceived by all students to be illustrations of their shared and equal authority in matters pertaining to school administration.

All nine student respondents believed that the school curriculum was based on individual expression; students claimed to experience a sense of "freedom" because of the emphasis on individual expression. Several claimed that "there was no pressure to conform." All students believed that attendance, academic goal-setting, and achievement were the individual's responsibility. Success, most students believed, was measured in terms of individual achievement. All nine respondents believed that most Evergreen students wanted to obtain their high school diploma and attend a post-secondary institution; all nine had set these goals for themselves. All nine students perceived that they had more freedom at Evergreen than they had in the high schools which they had previously attended. Several believed that several of their peers, after leaving the mainstream high schools, experienced difficulty adjusting to the freedom and the apparent absence of "rigid rules" at Evergreen. All believed that relationships between and among adolescents and teachers were built on equality, shared authority, respect for differences, and individual expression.

Students viewed their teachers as equals in matters pertaining to governance. All students believed that teachers, based on their education, experience and expertise, assumed a role that was equal to but different than students when it came to formal instruction in the classroom setting. Several students viewed teachers as curriculum designers and models of individualism within the classroom. Students believed the school's reputation for success was largely due to the creativity and dedication of the teachers. Students perceived the principal to be chief administrator and representative of the Board of Education. Students perceived the two Teacher Coordinators, the principals' elected representatives in the school, to be the individuals who were responsible for on-going administrative duties (i.e., disseminating information from the School Board to teachers and students, scheduling of courses, dealing directly with students on probation for violation of school rules). Most students did not believe that Teacher Coordinators had any special status or authority because of their elected position; they were seen as equals by most. Two students perceived the Teacher Coordinators as sometimes exercising discretionary power in matters of student discipline. All students believed that, in accordance with the alternative school philosophy, they were on "equal footing" with teachers in decisions concerning the overall governance of the school (i.e., selection of courses each semester, selection of Outreach projects, disciplining of community members who had violated rules and codes of behavior). One student believed that at staff meetings where students were not represented, decisions concerning students were made. None of the other students perceived teachers' decisions at staff meetings to directly impact on student equality or freedom.

Students believed tension within relationships was caused when individuals did not comply with the established rules and codes, when Ceased to Profit letters were issued, and when the general school membership had to deal with matters where there were differences of opinion (i.e., Women only "Women in Literature" class, Student Committee on Education Reform).

All staff members, like the students, had "chosen" to come to Evergreen. All teachers viewed the community governance model at Evergreen to be democratic as it was based on equality, shared authority, and consensual decision making; they all viewed participation in the governing bodies to be crucial and resonant with the philosophy of the community high school. All staff members believed that the school mandate was to "break down barriers" based on gender, age, and sexual orientation and encourage respect for differences and for ideas. Staff members viewed students as their "equals" in matters pertaining to school governance. One staff member claimed that when teachers went by their first name with students, they "had no cloak of authority" to hide behind.

All staff members perceived the admission procedure (i.e., CEASA) to be effective at promoting community involvement and student commitment to individual and school goals. Most staff members believed that the THREE RULES and codes of behavior were adequate tools for promoting appropriate student behaviors and for maintaining a positive learning environment. Most staff members were of the opinion that the CEASAs were effective problem-solving mechanisms within the school. Some staff believed that consensual decision making during the CEASAs was time consuming. Several long time staff members perceived the weekly staff meetings to be important for affirming the community focus and mandate among staff members, and for dealing with administrative matters and issues (i.e., Outreach program, field trips, exam scheduling, students on probation, government discussion paper) in a democratic fashion (i.e., no chairperson, consensual decision making). Some staff members found the staff meetings to be overly time consuming. Serving as an elected Teacher Coordinator was seen by most staff members to be a "duty" to be shared. Most teachers did not view the Teacher Coordinators as having greater status or more authority within the school. The off-site principal perceived his role as one of "minimal intervention" in the governance of the school; he claimed to have faith in the community school model, to which he referred as "democracy at ground level." Staff believed that the role of the principal was not clearly defined within the school governance model. Most staff viewed the principal as an outsider.

All teachers, like the students, claimed to experience a sense of "freedom" because of the alternative school mandate of delivering an "innovative curriculum." All teachers believed that attendance, academic goal-setting, and achievement were the individual student's responsibility; they also believed that their role as advisors/counselors to the students to be important. Success, most teachers believed, was measured in terms of individual achievement in academic and creative endeavors (i.e., "The Performance" at the Coffee House). All staff claimed to be aware that most

Evergreen students wanted to obtain their high school diploma and attend a post-secondary institution; all nine had these goals. Teachers believed that through the development of an innovative curriculum, they encouraged independent thinking, artistic expression, and awareness of social issues (i.e., forum on education reform, coffee houses, displays in The Gallery). All teachers felt supported and respected by students and colleagues for their knowledge and creativity. All believed that the Outreach program was an important aspect of the curriculum. Although an integral facet of the original community school concept, not all teachers agreed that field trips were integral to the current curriculum and school philosophy. All staff members believed that the positive reputation of the school was due to the community governance model, the emphasis on individual expression and innovative programming.

All staff members believed tensions within the school community arose when individuals did not act according to the philosophy and rules and regulations as expressed in the school handbook. The principal believed that the rules pertaining to unionized professional staff were not clearly defined in the alternative school system. He perceived that tension was most often caused in Evergreen and the other alternative schools when "disaffected staff called on [bureaucratic] rules to solve problems." One staff member believed that there were two sets of rules in operation at the school: cultural and bureaucratic; this staff member believed there were contradictions between the two that often caused tensions. All staff believed that proposed reform initiatives threatened the philosophy and community school concept of Evergreen.

Parents believed that they were part of the school community in as much as they could be elected to the Board of Directors. The parent who was on the Board of Directors believed it was her responsibility to inform other parents of issues and decisions by calling informational meetings (i.e., response to government discussion paper). Both parents believed that the rules were fair and that their children, all of whom had been on "probation" for breaking one or more of the THREE RULES, learned about setting parameters for behavior and goals for achievement through the philosophy at Evergreen. Parents credited the teachers for the school's strong academic reputation and overall success. Both parents believed that the proposed reform initiatives threatened the philosophy and community school concept of Evergreen.

Perceptions of the School Culture

According to Tonnies' theory of community, Gemeinschaft, or community of kinship, place, and mind, was at the opposite end of the continuum from Gesellschaft. Sergiovanni (1995a) drew from Tonnies' theory to explain the Gemeinschaft quality of schools that he had found to be organized around cultural norms and beliefs:

> Community by kinship characterizes the special kinds of relationships among people that create a unity that is similar to that found in families and other closely knit collections of people. Community of place characterizes sharing a common habitat or locale. This type of sharing with others for sustained periods of time creates a special identity and a shared sense of belonging that connects people together in special ways. Community of mind emerges from the binding of people to common goals, shared values, and shared conceptions of being and doing. Together, the three forms represent webs of meaning that tie people together by creating a special sense of belonging and a strong common identity. (p. 69)

All nine students viewed their arrival at Evergreen as an "escape from the mainstream" high schools which they had previously attended. Three student respondents believed that all Evergreen students, regardless of the length of time that they had attended the school, shared a bond because of their similar experiences in previous high schools. One student was of the opinion that students at Evergreen "created community" because of their common goal of "searching for Utopia."

All students claimed to experience a sense of belonging which they attributed to the respectful relationships with peers and teachers. Several students believed that the small size and unique culture of the school supported these respectful relationships which developed fairly quickly every semester. All students believed that there were not any "cliques" at Evergreen, but there were different student "groups." All students believed that groups intermingled. Several students viewed the history and communitarian traditions to be important aspects of the culture, even though most students did not know specific details about the traditions and history. Several referred to the "sense of place" which was created by the relaxed atmosphere within the school (i.e., couches, plants, pictures, art gallery, student lounge, the school symbol, the yin yang). Students viewed long time staff members as important and trustworthy cultural figures within the school.

All students described their teachers as "creative," and "passionate" individuals. Several students, and the office administrator, used the word "mentor" to describe the teachers' role in teacher-student relationships. Students viewed the principal to be a visitor, outside of daily events; they perceived their relationships with him to be respectful. All students viewed the school curriculum as innovative and credited the teachers for, as one student stated, "freeing them from the textbook." All students perceived that it was the norm and "cool" to discuss and debate ideas with peers and teachers. Several students believed that controversy and debate were important for promoting thought, reflection, and learning. One student referred to her learning experiences at Evergreen as "catching fire." Three students believed that the curriculum focused on social justice issues and that this focus was good preparation for dealing with changes going on in society. All students claimed that they were never "bored" by the Evergreen school program.

Several commented on what they perceived to be the "constant changes" going on in the school; these students believed this was caused by the constant human interactions and innovation going on within the school. (i.e., discussion, debate, field trips, forums, coffee houses, displays in the Gallery); as well, many believed that the impact of students involved in "individual expression" contributed to the sense that the environment was constantly changing. Several referred to the yin yang symbol when describing the atmosphere within the school. One former student viewed her education at Evergreen to have been a "pivotal point" in her development. Several students expressed regret over eventually having to leave the Evergreen community.

All students perceived tension within the community and relationships when peers failed to show respect or when trust was broken; all students, regardless of the length of time they had been attending the school, could cite incidents of when this had occurred.

The four long time staff members believed that the communitarian origins and history of the school were important in creating the "sense of place" at Evergreen. All staff members, like the students, viewed the history and community traditions to be important; several staff members claimed not to know the details of the school's history, but respected the long time members who did. The most senior staff member expressed the belief which he and others claimed contributed to the "special feeling" and the "sense of place" in the following way: "communities are collectives of people who support one another in questioning the status quo and making sense of the world." All staff believed that relationships between and among adolescents and adults were based on "making sense of the world." Staff meetings, many teachers believed, were examples of instances where adults questioned the status quo and supported one another in attempts to "make sense of the world." The weekly staff meetings for many teachers were also occasions where values and purposes were examined and affirmed.

Teachers perceived themselves as individualistic, knowledgeable and passionate about their subject area and responsible for creating student centered curriculum that was not reliant on prescribed textbooks. All staff members believed that the relationships between and among adolescents and adults, in matters of teaching and learning, were based on respect for ideas and the belief that "all have the right to speak and be heard." All staff believed that relevance of the curriculum to the students' lives, combined with the passion which they all shared for ideas and teaching, caused students to "catch fire." All staff members referred to the yin yang when they described the constantly changing and energized school atmosphere. Most believed that it was the diversity among individuals, and the constant human interactions and innovations which gave rise to this perception (i.e., discussion, debate, field trips, forums, coffee houses, displays in the Gallery). Several staff members, like the students, claimed that they were "never bored" at Evergreen.

Teachers claimed to feel supported in their creativity by the respect and trust which they were shown by colleagues, students, and parents. Many staff members gave credit to their colleagues and the "exceptional Evergreen students" when they spoke of the school's reputation for high student achievement.

The principal perceived that the community spirit and sense of place shared by people comprising the community high school could be overwhelming for some newcomers and outsiders. Three other staff members made similar comments and referred to their own experiences of becoming part of the well-established Evergreen staff. Several staff members believed that with the increasing size of the school population the "community spirit" was being eroded. Two long time staff members expressed concern over what they perceived to be evidence of "Evergreen becoming more like the mainstream."

All parents perceived positive changes in their children following their arrival at Evergreen (i.e., positive attitude toward learning, happy). Parents attributed these changes to the respectful relationships with adults and peers that were built on equality, respect for differences, freedom of expression and trust.

Perceptions of Routine Activities

All students perceived participation in classroom instruction, in the Outreach Program, in governance activities (i.e., school meetings and forums, CEASA, Board of Directors), and in school functions and events (i.e., coffee houses, The Gallery displays, field trips) to comprise routine activities at Evergreen. All students believed socializing with peers in the student lounge or in the designated smoking area to be part of their routine activities. Students believed that all but socializing in the student lounge were activities which included both students and staff. Although all student respondents perceived that there were different groups of students within the school, no student believed these groups to be "closed" or "cliquish." Students came to Evergreen from across the city; many claimed to have "friends" who went to other secondary schools. For most students, socializing with peers was not their highest priority. All students, including those who had had difficulty adjusting to routine activities in other schools, viewed their experiences at Evergreen to be challenging and worthwhile. Several students expressed the opinion that they were "never bored" at Evergreen.

Teachers believed that participation in community governance, classroom instruction, Outreach, and school community activities to be routine. Within each of these groups of activities, there was variety. Several teachers also made the claim that they were never bored.

Both parents believed that the innovative Evergreen program and emphasis on community involvement were "routine" activities that were different from what they or their children had experienced in other high schools.

Perceptions of "Non-Routine" Activities

As much of the curriculum occurred without textbooks and was experientially based (i.e., Outreach and field trips), students, especially the two who had just arrived that fall, perceived many activities to be "non-routine." Field trips, Outreach projects, classroom discussions, and teachers willing to debate ideas outside of class time were several activities which newer students found different.

Students perceived issues to be of two varieties: issues of social justice which were academic within the school environment, but sometimes resulted in "activism" (i.e., violence against women, Student Committee on Education Reform); issues surrounding the transgression and administration of school rules and regulations (i.e., CEASA, student probation, CEASED TO PROFIT letters). Both sorts of issues, students believed, prompted involvement.

Teachers viewed their idea-based and student-centered teaching to be non-routine, as "art" and as "ephemeral." No teacher used "pre-determined" lesson plans; each believed that he or she was a "creator" of curriculum. Several teachers and all students believed that teaching in the mainstream high schools was routine if not boring. Several teachers believed that daily instruction revolved around student interest and engagement in a subject area. Teachers viewed issues affecting the school to be of three varieties: social justice issues including education reform, dealing with students' transgressions of rules and making decisions about placing students on probation, and tension over differences of opinions within the staff. All teachers believed that "controversy" was not to be avoided, and argument and debate over issues to be fairly routine.

Both parents used the word "wonderful" to describe the unique Outreach program. Parents believed that teacher expertise, creativity and dedication to student learning contributed to the innovative atmosphere within the school. Issues for parents included education reform. Although both parents believed that there were other issues within the school community, they perceived themselves to be outside them. Parents believed it was up to the staff and students to resolve issues through their governance structures. Parents believed that Evergreen with its innovative idea-based curriculum focused on social justice and activism "prepared students for the changing world."

Summary

In my search for patterns in the data collected at Evergreen School, I noted a high degree of correspondence and coherence among the perceptions of the staff respondents. In particular, there were several instances where perceptions of some or all of the four long time staff members corresponded; this finding indicated to me that these individuals had, over time, "shaped their realities," in ways, "to fit each other's" (Stake, 1995, p. 101). The newer staff members expressed views of events that were occasionally different from the other staff members. The principal sometimes perceived and interpreted events in a manner that differed the most from other staff members.

There was also a high degree of correspondence among the perceptions of the ten student respondents. In particular, there were several instances where the perceptions of students who had attended Evergreen for more than two consecutive semesters exhibited a high degree of correspondence.

In several respects, the perspectives of the two parent respondents corresponded with each other and with the other respondents. In other respects, the two parents' views appeared to have been shaped by their perceptions of their children's experiences at Evergreen and other high schools.

Major findings from analysis of the data included:

1. Respondents all felt that they had "chosen" Evergreen alternative secondary school.
2. Respondents, particularly long time staff members, believed that the history and communitarian traditions had shaped the current philosophy and governance structures of the school.
3. All staff and student respondents believed that their experiences were resonant with the school philosophy of "community involvement" and "support for individual expression." Parent respondents believed that their children's experiences were resonant with the school philosophy.
4. Most staff and student respondents perceived that the THREE RULES and Codes of Behavior embodied the values underpinning their experiences (i.e., respect, equality, shared authority, freedom).
5. Most respondents believed that the governance model provided structures through which these values were experienced (i.e., CEASA, school meetings, Board of Directors, staff meetings, consensual decision making).
6. Respondents all claimed to experience a sense of freedom and belonging, which they attributed to the relationships built on equality, shared authority, respect for differences and individual expression. Several respondents believed that the small size of the school was a factor contributing to how quickly new members developed respectful relationships with others.
7. Several respondents believed that tension was most often caused by disaffected staff and students who "broke trust" by not acting in accordance with the philosophy and within the parameters for membership in the community.
8. Respondents believed that success was measured in terms of individual achievement in academic and creative endeavors (i.e., grades for university entrance, displays in The Gallery, coffee house presentations).

9. All student and parent respondents credited the teachers for student success and the school's reputation for success. Student and parent respondents referred specifically to the teachers' individual creativity, passion for ideas, and academic expertise.
10. All respondents perceived that the school culture of continuous change (i.e., "sense of place") was caused by the innovative and experiential curriculum, the emphasis on individual expression and creativity, as well as the human interactions. Many respondents believed this was why they were never "bored."
11. All respondents believed that proposed education reforms threatened the alternative school system and the Evergreen community school governance model.
12. Respondents perceived that the role of the principal was not clearly defined within the school governance model. The principal viewed his role as one of "minimal intervention."

Summary of Interpretations of Leadership Included in Chapter 7

The case study report on Evergreen Community School found in Chapter 6 was based on the findings summarized above. Chapter 7 was devoted to the interpretation of leadership at Evergreen and was based on analysis of the case study report. Following is a summary of the interpretations of leadership included in Chapter 7.

In describing schools as communities, Merz and Furman (1997) and others (Sergiovanni, 1994a, 1995a) have used Tonnies' theoretical framework which situates communities on a continuum bound on one end by Gemeinschaft, and on the other by Gesellschaft. This is a useful construct to illustrate the Evergreen respondents' perceptions of the sometimes paradoxical blend of formal organizational and cultural qualities within the community school. It is for this reason, Merz and Furman's (1997, pp. 14-15) definition of Gesellschaft and Sergiovanni's (1994, p. 95) definition of Gemeinschaft have been incorporated in the above summary as well as in the explanation of community under the "Context of Leadership" in Chapter 7.

Critical attributes of the context of leadership at Evergreen included: (1) the communitarian history and traditions. Many respondents believed that the body of shared understandings about the communitarian history and traditions provided a philosophical framework for participation in school governance and in activities within the larger community of which the schools was a part. (2) the mix of formal organizational qualities (Gesellschaft) and cultural qualities (Gemeinschaft). Respondents believed that the rational-bureaucratic aspects of the philosophy statement, THREE RULES, and codes of behavior, provided structure and well-defined parameters for membership in the community school. Respondents also believed that rational-bureaucratic aspects were blended with other humanistic aspects of the school culture. (3) the blending of institutional (gesellschaftlicht) and moral authority (gemeinschaftlicht). Most respondents viewed the prescriptive rules and codes of behavior to be formative. All staff and parent respondents, as well as most student respondents, believed that most Evergreen students eventually became self-managing and self-directed community members. (4) trusting relationships built on equality and mutual respect. Respondents believed that their relationships with others within the school were the single most important aspect of their school experience. Mutual respect, equality, and respect for differences were most often cited as the internalized and shared values upon which the trusting relationships were based. (5) freedom and individual expression. All respondents valued the "freedom" which they experienced and the emphasis placed on individual expression. Within the well-defined parameters of community and the complex network of relationships, school members claimed to feel "free" and encouraged to "express their individuality." Freedom and individual expression were believed to be critical to teaching and learning at Evergreen. (6) a school culture of permanence and continuous change. Respondents believed that shared understandings based on the communitarian history and traditions comprised cultural qualities that were enduring. They also believed that the values upon which trusting relationships were built were also enduring (i.e., mutual respect, equality, and respect for differences). Respondents viewed the exchanges and interactions among school members as ephemeral and constantly changing aspects of the culture.

The on-going questioning, discussions, and conversations focused on making sense of the events and experiences embodied what many respondents called the "spirit" of Evergreen. In Chapter 7, I referred to these contextualized activities as "the processes" of leadership. School members believed that the exchanges and interactions that enabled them to construct meanings about life, school, and society, also enabled them to express themselves as individuals. Occasionally, these exchanges and interactions, it was believed, prompted collective expression and action (i.e., The Womb, forum on education reform, coffee houses). "Reciprocal processes," claimed Lambert et al. "enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling" (1995, p. 29). The reciprocal processes comprising the "spirit" of Evergreen are described and framed in Chapter 7 by the three terms Plato used to describe the human spirit: Reason, Passion and Courage, and the Sensual. Respondents believed that their interactions and exchanges were focused on making sense of the world and individual expression. They also believed that these interactions and exchanges could be rational (i.e., the forum on education reform), passionate (i.e., the womb) and sensual (i.e., performances at the coffee house). In order to capture respondents' perceptions of these interactions and exchanges, multiple references to the literature and illustrations from the case study report are incorporated in the interpretations of the "leadership processes" in Chapter 7.

Respondents referred to numerous tensions within the school community. Most believed that tension was not the same as segmentation or fragmentation. Several believed that tension was caused by individual differences and overall diversity. Many respondents referred to the school symbol, the Yin and Yang, when describing how they believed the tensions caused by diversity naturally occurred within democracies like Evergreen. Respondents often used the word "struggle," with a neutral connotation, in order to describe tensions which they believed occurred when Gemeinschaft values (i.e., equality, respect for differences, trust) clashed with Gesellschaft values (i.e., union mediation in staff dispute). Respondents expressed frustration over on-going controversy where consensus was not possible. In a similar vein, respondents perceived that there were clashes between mechanistic thinking (i.e., rational-technical) and ecological thinking (i.e., holistic, non-linear). Several respondents believed that ecological thinking was the dominant perspective at Evergreen. All respondents believed that the secondary school reforms proposed by the government represented mechanistic thinking. From their ecological perspective, they viewed the proposed changes as threatening to the alternative school philosophy.

Underpinning and contributing to the co-evolution of the context and processes of leadership at Evergreen were factors which included: the small size of the high school, students who were on average older than their counterparts in the regular high schools, students who belonged to "permeable families" and a postmodern youth culture (Elkind, 1995), the stability and impetus provided by teacher leadership.

Conclusions, Working Hypotheses, and Recommendations

Like in the Riverview case, the most general working hypothesis that can be supported by these findings and interpretations is that Evergreen students and staff regularly experienced the phenomenon that Lambert et al. have defined as constructivist leadership: "the reciprocal processes that enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling" (1995, p. 29). Findings indicate that staff and students: (a) regularly participated in activities which within Lambert et al.'s framework are called "reciprocal processes," (b) were enabled to construct meanings about lived experiences and events through these reciprocal processes, (c) experienced these reciprocal processes within the context of respectful relationships, (d) affirmed their common purposes and focus on community involvement and individual expression.

Staff and students regularly experienced, understood, and could communicate their understanding of the phenomenon as described in the preceding. They did not, however, call the phenomenon "leadership." Stated as a more specific working hypothesis:

> Staff and students experience leadership as the reciprocal processes of knowledge construction which occur within the context of trusting relationships built on equality and respect for differences. Leadership occurs when those participating in the reciprocal processes are conjointly focused on community involvement and individual expression. Staff and students have similar understandings of the nature of the phenomenon. They do not, however, identify the phenomenon as "leadership."

This working hypothesis raises a question that could form the basis for further leadership study. An investigation of how staff and students in alternative secondary schools conceptualize leadership might generate new conceptions of the leadership phenomenon. The need for new conceptions of secondary school leadership has been identified in the successful secondary schools' literature (Gaskell, 1995; Lee, Bryk & Smith, 1993; Lightfoot, 1983; Wilson & Corcoran, 1988), as well as in the broader field of organizational leadership (Bass, 1990; Immegart, 1988; Rost, 1991). Moreover, an investigation of this nature could provide practical information for school and school district administrators searching for alternative models of secondary school leadership.

When describing the phenomenon outlined in the above working hypothesis, almost all staff and students used the term "community." This finding suggests that there is a relationship between how staff and students viewed the school organization and the experience described in the above as "leadership." Findings summarized in the preceding section suggest that the predominant view of organization among the students and staff respondents can most closely be described in cultural terms, similar to what Lambert et al. defined as "community." Borrowing from ecological theorists including Capra (1991) and Wheatley (1992), these authors defined community as

> an interconnected and complex web of reciprocal relationships sustained and informed by their purposeful actions. Community is manifest in the diversity of the system; and the more diverse, the more rich and complex. Such communities are flexible and open to information provided through feedback spirals, as well as unexpected fluctuations and surprises that contain possibilities. The co-evolution, or shared growth, of the participants in this community is propelled by the joint construction of meaning and knowledge and involves continual creation and adaptation. (1995, pp. 42-43)

From this finding emerges the following specific working hypothesis:

> Staff and students experience leadership within the context of communal relationships built on enduring values embodied in the school culture. These values: trust, equality, and respect for differences, are implicit in the history and traditions and explicit in the philosophy statement and school governance structures.

This working hypothesis raises two possible questions for further study. In the above "Summary of Interpretations of Leadership from Chapter 7," the small size of the alternative secondary school was described as a factor underpinning and contributing to the co-evolution of the context and processes of leadership at Evergreen Community High School. As was previously suggested, an investigation of how leadership is experienced and understood by students, staff, and parents within a larger secondary school might yield findings that could be useful in the on-going study of the impact of "school size" (Barker & Gump, 1964; Lee, Smerdon, McMahon & Curtis, 1997; Lee & Smith, 1997; Furman, 1997; Oxley, 1997; Raywid, 1997, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1995b). A second possible question based on this working hypothesis would guide an investigation of how students in alternative secondary schools view their relationships with peers and teachers. Findings from the above could potentially: generate new conceptions of secondary school leadership as well as different ways of conceptualizing secondary school organization; add to the research on secondary school restructuring (Siskin & Little, 1995; Tewel, 1995); and be informative for policy-makers and practitioners involved in secondary school reform (Blase & Blase, 1997; Siskin & Little, 1995).

One other factor outlined in the above was the stability and impetus provided by the teacher leadership at Evergreen. Citing innovative curriculum, subject expertise, and passion for ideas and social justice, all students and parents credited the teachers at Evergreen for the success of individual students as well as the school's reputation for success. All students and parents believed that the Evergreen curriculum, "freed from the textbook," was what caused students to become self-motivated and self-directed learners, to "catch fire." At Evergreen where there was no stratified leadership structure, teaching was, as Lambert and her colleagues explained:

> an act of leadership, requiring an understanding of one's role, a commitment to empower all learners, the skills of facilitation, and the willingness to inquire about and reflect on one's own learning. . . . constructivist leaders are teachers. (1996, pp. 120-121).

Stated as a working hypothesis:

> Students experience leadership as the reciprocal processes that occur within the context of respectful relationships with teachers. Teachers facilitate and enable the construction of meanings about life, events, and society through their belief in, and modeling of constructivist learning principles.

This working hypothesis emphasizes teachers' continuous learning and raises a possible question for investigation. What is the relationship between teachers' continuous learning and student learning and achievement in secondary schools? Findings from a study of secondary school teachers' continuous learning could possibly add to recent research on teacher development and teacher leadership (Adelman, Eagle & Hargreaves, 1997; Darling-Hammond, Wise & Klein, 1995; Hargreaves, 1997; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Lambert et al., 1996; Lieberman, 1990, 1992, 1995a, 1995b; Little, 1982)

A final general working hypothesis that can be supported by the findings and interpretations is that some Evergreen parents occasionally experienced leadership in the ways outlined above (i.e., Board of Directors meeting), but those who did not participate in the school governance bodies did not. Instead, the findings suggest that the parents' understanding of leadership at Evergreen derived largely through their perceptions and understandings of their children's experiences. The processes though which parents came to have knowledge of their children's experiences, however, could be described as constructivist leadership. Stated as a specific working hypothesis:

> Parents experience leadership through their perceptions and understandings of their children's experiences. The reciprocal processes through which parents construct meaning about their children's experiences for the purpose of developing shared understandings, is leadership.

The above working hypothesis raises the question about the role of parents in school leadership. Driscoll, in her research on secondary schools, has recently focused on the implications of the "school as community" concept for the way researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers think about "parents and schools" (1995, p. 209). Further research on parents' perceptions of secondary school leadership could inform practitioners and policy-makers who, by involving parents in shared governance leadership models, often assume parental expertise (Alberta Education, 1997; Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1996).

Final Comments on Secondary School Leadership

In undertaking this collective case study, it was not my intention to compare leadership in Riverview School with leadership in Evergreen Community High School. As Stake (1994) reminded us, "generalizations from differences between any two cases are much less to be trusted than generalizations from one" (p. 242). Over the conduct of this study, it became clear to me that an understanding of leadership could not be separated from the socio-historical context in which it occurred. Nonetheless, at this point I wish to acknowledge and comment upon several similar themes which emerged from my study and analysis of leadership in Riverview and Evergreen schools, for I believe that such a discussion could be informative for researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners who are interested in leadership and involved in secondary school reform.

I have organized the following comments and discussion using the headings: "Moving From a Vision to a Shared Philosophy;" "Importance of Teacher Leadership;" "School Size;" and "Tensions Underlying the Context and Processes of Leadership."

Moving From a Vision to a Shared Philosophy

Long time staff members from both Riverview and Evergreen schools spoke about the evolution from what they perceived to be an "original vision" to a "shared school philosophy." All perceived that this evolution coincided with the development of a school culture characterized in each case by respectful relationships, trust, the centrality of learning, and the on-going discussions and conversations focused on making sense of events and experiences.

At Riverview, for example, where "things were not written down," long time staff members referred to the "pattern that had been established" since the arrival of the principal 11 years before. In the case study report of Riverview School, I included the following passage taken from my initial interview with the principal. Implicit in Al Brenneis' account of "becoming his own boss" is the vision underlying the changes that had occurred over time at Riverview:

> "I liked the feeling of being my own boss. I liked feeling free to make my own decisions and choices. That's how I learn the best. I thought if I was ever a school principal, I would try and give students and staff the opportunity to have that same experience. You have to be prepared for people to make mistakes. That's how we learn. The only people who don't make mistakes are those who don't do anything."

Implicit in this account as well are the values that I heard described and repeated in all of my interviews with students and staff members at Riverview. The importance that all respondents ascribed to freedom, trust, learning, and personal responsibility for choices comprised a collective philosophy at Riverview School that resembled what Sergiovanni (1996) described as a "moral voice":

> As simple as the idea of moral voice is, it has the potential to revolutionize school leadership. Instead of thinking about bureaucratic management and personal leadership as the driving forces that push and pull the school and its members forward, moral voice helps us think of leadership more as the cultivation of a shared followership. Community members are bonded together as they are bound to share commitments in a covenantal relationship. Principals and other administrators remain important, but are differently important. They have special responsibilities to behave as head followers of the community's ideas, values, and shared commitments.
> (p. 58)

Over time, as the original vision of "becoming your own boss" evolved into a shared philosophy or "moral voice," Al Brenneis' role had changed; he recognized that school members no longer looked just to him, the school principal, for ideas, permission, approval, or even to be chief problem-solver. In the case report, I have quoted Al as saying that "they don't need me around here anymore." Similarly, I have included Al's reference to the principal's office, once the hub of decision making and problem solving within the school, as now being a "storage room" at Riverview.

Over time, Al had remained important as principal of Riverview, but "differently important." Interesting perhaps, is that Al Brenneis has recently been appointed Assistant Superintendent within the school district of which Riverview is a part. In this capacity, he has taken on the challenge of supporting other principals as they "become their own bosses" in the district's newly approved site-based management governance model. Al Brenneis' commitment to his vision remains unwavering.

In Evergreen Community High School, long time staff members perceived that the current school philosophy had developed out of the vision upon which the original Evergreen private school had been founded. Evergreen founders, it was claimed, believed that the world was undergoing significant social change and that a community school modeled on democratic principles was the organizational form that would best prepare adolescent children for individual and collective participation in those changes. Implicit in the accounts of student, staff, and parent respondents at Evergreen were the socio-political ideas and values underpinning the creation of Evergreen. Over time, the value individuals placed on freedom, equality, mutual respect, individual expression, learning, and personal responsibility had become inextricably interwoven into the culture and traditions of Evergreen; they had become part of the shared "community understandings" (Sergiovanni, 1995a, p. 69); they had shaped and were reflected in the philosophy statement included in the current school handbook:

> Evergreen is a school based upon community involvement and strong support for individual expression. There is tolerance and latitude for this expression within the written rules of the school and within the behavioral standards which reflect the ethos of the community. The Evergreen community comprises parents, students, and staff working together to create a unique learning environment.

These values were enacted and affirmed through the participation of all school members as equals in the school governance activities including the school meetings and CEASAs. The importance that all respondents, including even the very newest school members, ascribed to participation in such activities underscored the extent to which the original vision of Evergreen had become a communal philosophy, guided by what Sergiovanni (1996) described as "natural will" and "moral authority":

> Compacts and shared commitments among principals, parents, teachers, and students and the moral authority they provide, are key in applying Community Theory to schools. As this authority becomes established, it speaks as a moral voice that substitutes for the usual management systems and leadership

> strategies we now use to provide direction, and to control people and events. This moral voice compels everyone in the school to meet their commitments, and to become self-managing. (p. 58)

Evergreen had acquired a principal when it had joined the large urban school district but, as had happened at Riverview, over time the room that had functioned and been labeled the "Principal's Office" had been symbolically transformed. At Evergreen where there was no principal on site, the principal's office had become a "teachers' room" and was only one of the several hubs where decision making and problem solving occurred. Sometimes out of frustration over the time and effort required to work through problems and arrive at consensual decisions, school staff and students would call on Doug, school principal for the past seven years, for help and clarification in the processes that were becoming drawn out. To the disappointment of some, however, Doug saw himself as an outsider and his role as being largely "non-interventionist;" he had an unwavering belief in the Evergreen governance model characterized by its consensual decision making; he did not use his bureaucratic authority unless directed to by the school board. Interestingly, Doug recently retired as alternative secondary school principal in order to take up the challenge of running for the Canadian New Democratic Party in the last federal election. When asked about his motives given the improbability of winning, his reply was "someone has to do it." Respect for, and participation in the democratic process were imperatives in the mind of this designated school leader, regardless of the outcome.

In each case, long time participants believed that the school's reputation for success was attributable in part to the evolution from a vision to a collective and shared school philosophy. In both cases, participants perceived that this evolution had occurred over time and involved changes in the school culture and an entrenchment of shared values including mutual respect, equality, freedom, an emphasis on learning, and the on-going discussions and conversations focused on making sense of events and experiences. In each case, the role of the school principal had become "differently important" as a result of the cultural changes which emphasized a shift from institutional to moral authority.

The shared governance leadership models currently being promoted by governments intent on reforming secondary schooling focus on a shift from institutional authority centered in the principalship to authority shared among all school members. In larger secondary schools, middle managers, including assistant principals, department heads, and curriculum leaders, as well as the principal are being re-cast as "one among equals" in the proposed shared decision making models (Blase & Blase, 1997; Tewel, 1994). Evidence from the case studies reported herein suggest that "time" is a critical factor in the shift from institutional to moral authority. Although not conclusive, the findings from the Riverview and Evergreen case studies raise some caution about the potential success of mandated shared governance models that may not necessarily allow sufficient "time" for the kind of cultural changes capable of supporting a move from "vision" to "shared philosophy."

Importance of Teacher Leadership

The principal, student, and parent respondents in both Riverview and Evergreen believed that each school's reputation for success was due largely to the efforts and expertise of the teachers. Almost all respondents in both schools credited the teachers for establishing the respectful and trusting school environment in which students claimed to experience a sense of freedom and support for their individual and collective learning endeavors.

Significant as well was that neither secondary school had guidance counselors or department heads. In both schools, students and parents perceived that the teachers fulfilled functions implicit in these roles and others; these respondents used terms like "coach," "counselor," and "guide" to describe the teachers. At Evergreen where students were on average older than students at Riverview, the term "mentor" was also used to describe the teachers who helped as individual students set academic goals and individualized learning agendas. At Riverview, students referred to the principals as "teachers" first and administrators second.

Teachers at Riverview School were self-described as "energy people" and "innovators." Al Brenneis, principal of Riverview, believed that the teachers were

> "people who others might consider 'difficult.' These are the kind of people, I find, who are the workers and the innovators. You just have to turn them loose and let them be their own boss."

In a similar vein, the Evergreen teachers described themselves as "unruly individuals" and "creators of curriculum."

Based on my own observations and analysis, I would describe the teachers of Riverview and Evergreen as chief facilitators in the "sense-making processes" going on in each school; these teachers were "constructivist leaders" (Lambert et al., 1996,

p. xvii). However, as was pointed out in the preceding section, respondents did not typically refer to the work or efforts of teachers as "leadership," in spite of the critical role respondents believed teachers played in each school site. Teachers seldom referred to their actions as "leadership" or themselves as "leaders." Lambert et al. argued that education reform to date has failed because of the traditional assumptions about school organization and leadership which underpin attempts at reform. In schools where patriarchal views of organization remain dominant, Lambert et al. contended, "teachers do not grow up;" teachers do not "progress through stages of adult development or become reflective practitioners" (p. 4). Arguing that schools must be restructured according to "networks of relationships rather than hierarchies of established roles and authority" (p. xvii), these authors claimed that teachers must come to see themselves as "constructivist leaders" and assume additional roles such as "guides and mentors" in the lives of children (p. 78). These authors outlined three changes that they believed were necessary in order that teachers might come to see themselves as constructivist leaders and their work as leadership:

> 1. A formal establishment of teacher leader roles
> 2. The development of leadership behaviors among all teachers
> 3. A redefinition of the role of the principal to one that is collaborative and inclusive. (p. 29)

In recent years, educational researchers and scholars have placed teacher professional development at the center of the school reform agenda (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Sykes, 1996). New perspectives underscore the shift from thinking of professional development as the occasional workshop or in-service designed to enhance individual technical expertise, to thinking of professional development as continuous adult learning which occurs in collaboration with others within supportive school communities (Barth, 1990; Lambert et al., 1996; Little, 1990). Findings from recent studies suggest that teacher learning is sustained through the development of team approaches to group problem-solving and group processing strategies which promote individual inquiry and reflection (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Lambert et al., 1996; Rallis, 1989). Within the professional development research literature, new perspectives are emerging which focus on the development of "teacher leadership" as key to education reform and enhanced student achievement (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996; Lambert et al., 1996).

Although the evidence from the two case studies included in this report is not conclusive, it does suggest that in order to bring about reform within schools, assumptions about professional development as well as those underlying what are commonly considered the roles of "teacher" and "principal" must be challenged. Further, the findings suggest that school leadership must be defined in terms of the capacity of teachers to facilitate and collaborate in the continuous learning and achievement of all school members.

School Size

Respondents in both Riverview and Evergreen believed that the small size of the school was a critical factor in supporting the development of the respectful relationships and positive learning environment in each school. In these "undermanned" secondary schools with no guidance counselors or department heads, respondents perceived that students and teachers developed a sense of interdependence and "authentic" relationships (Lambert et al., 1996) as they worked toward common goals of individual and collective learning.

The issue of high school size, Lee and Smith (1997) contended, has "received much attention in theoretical and popular writings about education, as well as in reports spelling out ideas for reforming schools" (p. 217). The prevalent belief that "smaller is better" has prompted several research projects in recent years intent on establishing linkages between school size and improved student learning. Findings from Lee and Smith's extensive study of the impact of high school size upon student learning suggested that moderate-sized high schools of between 600 and 900 were ideal when considering optimal student achievement in core subjects including language arts and mathematics (p. 217). In a very thorough discussion of how to "change high school size" given that many existent high school buildings house upwards from 2 000 students, these authors cited recent research that has been conducted on creating "a set of smaller schools-within-schools inside larger high schools" (p. 220). Constraining unit size, they argued, "may help to promote the human dimensions of schooling" (p. 208). In a similar vein, Raywid (1998) in her synthesis of recent research conducted on small schools contended that "small schools lead to improved student achievement and enable educators to realize many of the other goals of school reform" (p. 34).

Although not conclusive, the findings from the Riverview and Evergreen case studies suggest that the small school size had significant implications for the context and processes of leadership within each school. The findings reported herein are consistent with those which prompted Barker and Gump (1964) to conclude that:

> The data of this research and our own educational values tell us that a school should be sufficiently small that all of its students are needed for its enterprises. A school should be small enough that students are not redundant. (p. 202)

Although Raywid (1998) cautioned against looking at recent findings from the small school research as the "silver bullet" for improved student achievement, she was optimistic in her conclusion that:

> The accumulating, now substantial evidence tells us that small schools offer a setting that can accommodate and build in much of what educational research is recommending. They provide a promising reply to many of the questions that plague us, such as, How can we get effective change? and How can we make schools work for at-risk students? And they offer what is perhaps our most promising single strategy for realizing a number of the goals of current reformers--including new governance and accountability arrangements, personalization and individualization, strong professional communities, authentic instruction and engagement, and genuine and lasting achievement for a great many more youngsters. (p. 38)

Tensions Underlying the Context and Processes of Leadership

Implicit in the tensions underlying the context and processes which I describe in Chapters 5 and 7 are the issues identified in Chapters 1 and 2 as those fueling the current "leadership crisis." Even though Riverview and Evergreen were both schools with a reputation for success where constructivist leadership as described by Lambert et al. (1995) was observable and understandable to participants, there was still evidence, for example, of: (1) confusion between leadership and management. In Riverview School, school members looked to the principals to provide for such managerial tasks as timetabling and student discipline even though the same school members did not necessarily involve the principals in making sense of personal experiences and academic challenges. At Evergreen, even though school members were used to operating without the support of a school-based principal, when challenges arose, their response was to consult with the principal even when they knew that he would not intervene. In both schools, when respondents were initially asked about leadership, there was a tendency to focus on the "good management" skills of the principal (Rost, 1991, p. 180). As is explained in Chapters 1 and 2, for this reason the word "leadership" was omitted from the first semi-structured interviews. (2) an elusive understanding of relationships and the exercise of influence within relationships. Confusion over the exercise of influence within relationships was most apparent in both schools when individuals acted in such a way that they were asked to withdraw from the school due to some transgression of school rules. In the Riverview case study, this elusive understanding and the tensions caused are addressed under the heading "Duality of Human Nature." In the Evergreen case study, the tensions caused by the elusive understanding are discussed under the heading "The Clashes Between Mechanistic and Ecological Thinking." (3) competing theories and notions about what leadership actually is. As was noted earlier in this chapter in the explication of the working hypotheses in each case, participants regularly experienced, understood, and could communicate their understanding of the phenomenon described as constructivist leadership (p. 29). They did not, however, call the phenomenon "leadership." The specific tensions caused by the competing theories and notions are discussed under the heading "The Tension Between the Cultural and Bureaucratic" in Chapter 5, and under "The Paradox of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft" in Chapter 7.

Findings here are not conclusive, but are consistent with those of other researchers and theorists within the fields of organizational (Bass, 1990; Heifetz, 1994; Immegart; 1988, Rost, 1991; Wheatley, 1992) and educational leadership (Lambert, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1996) who are presently calling for the development of new perspectives on the leadership phenomenon.

Conclusion

In her explanation of the overall aims of research, Merriam elaborated on the significance of the "single study:"

> 'The value of any single study is derived as much from how it fits with and expands on previous work as from the study's intrinsic properties.' And if some studies seem more significant than others, it is 'because the piece of the puzzle they solve (or the puzzle they introduce) is extremely important, not because they are solutions in and of themselves (Cooper, 1984).' (Merriam, 1988, p. 61)

In this chapter, a summary of the findings as well as conclusions related to the specific research questions and overall purpose of the study were presented. Overarching themes which emerged from the analysis of the two case studies have been included as final comments on secondary school leadership. These findings, conclusions, and comments are offered as "illustrations" of how leadership was experienced and understood, at a particular point in time, by individuals in each of the secondary schools involved in this study. It is now incumbent upon the reader to judge the extent to which this study has achieved its stated purpose, and the nature of the "piece of the puzzle" that it has provided.

CHAPTER 9

FINAL COMMENTS ON AUTHENTICITY

This chapter is a continuation of the discussion on authenticity which was begun in Chapters 1 and 3.

Authenticity

The final aim of any constructivist inquiry, explained Guba and Lincoln, is to "distill a consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated than any of the predecessor constructions (including, of course, the etic construction of the investigator)" (1994, p. 111). When I undertook this collective case study, it was my intent to gain an understanding of the constructed realities of various staff members, students, and parents within each secondary school. My belief was that an understanding of the inter-relationship of individuals' perceptions within each school site was instrumental in addressing the specific research questions and the overall purpose of this investigation.

The working hypotheses presented in the preceding chapter comprise the "consensus constructions" distilled from this study of leadership in two secondary schools with a reputation for success. They do not, however, represent absolute truths regarding the leadership phenomenon. Searching for absolute truths, Stake reminded us (1995), is like searching for "a universal reality," which is impossible to find as it does not exist.

How does one judge a study conducted within the constructivist paradigm? Beyond the trustworthiness criteria, Guba and Lincoln proposed a second set of criteria, the authenticity criteria, which they claimed were important for judging the "goodness and quality of constructivist inquiries (1994, p. 114)." These criteria include fairness, ontological authenticity (enlarges personal constructions), educative authenticity (leads to improved understanding of construction of others), catalytic authenticity (stimulates to action), and tactical authenticity (empowers action) (p. 114). The following comments on each of the authenticity criteria are provided so that the reader might better judge the quality of the findings and conclusions presented in this study.

Fairness

"Fairness" is a multi-dimensional criterion which I addressed throughout the conduct of this study. The parameters for "fairness" were established upon the approval of the ethics review forms and the receipt of letters of permission from the three school districts. As researcher, I attempted to be "fair" in the way that I observed ethical guidelines and agreed upon research protocols in both cases. Over the five months spent gathering data, "fairness" assumed another connotation. In busy secondary schools, "fair" use of respondents' time for interviewing also had to be considered. As well, during the data analysis and writing stages of this study, respondents were asked to become involved on three separate occasions as I carried out member checks. Feedback from the member checks indicated that respondents perceived the research findings to be "fair," and their commitment of time worthwhile.

The findings, conclusions, and working hypotheses in Chapter 8 are "fair" then, in the sense that they reflect, as much as possible, the constructed realities of the 41 staff members, students, and parents who participated in this study.

Ontological Authenticity

By assuming a relativist ontology when I undertook this collective case study, it was my intent to gain an understanding of the constructed realities of respondents, as well as the way in which these individuals who shared the same socio-historical context "shaped their realities to fit each other's" (Stake, 1995, p. 101). My belief was that an understanding of the inter-relationship of individuals' perceptions within each site was instrumental in enlarging my personal constructions of the leadership phenomenon.

As was stated in Chapter 1, my reasons for undertaking this study were based on my years of experience as a high school teacher and administrator in a secondary school that has a reputation for success. My most recent experiences as an administrator responsible for implementing several government-mandated reform initiatives prompted this particular investigation of leadership in secondary schools. In Chapter 1, I acknowledged that through the experience of conducting this study, my etic constructions would be challenged. I also recognized that they would evolve. In Chapter 3, I included an excerpt from an essay which I wrote prior to conducting this study. My reasons for writing "Reflections On the Importance of the Biographical" were threefold: (1) I believed this essay would assist me in being self-reflexive throughout the conduct of this investigation. (2) I believed this essay would help others assess the impact of subjectivity upon the findings. (3) I believed trustworthiness and authenticity would be enhanced by making these preconceptions explicit and part of the audit trail which was maintained throughout the conduct of this study (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 111).

How have my personal constructions of the leadership phenomenon been enlarged? As I compare the personal essay written almost two years ago with the research findings and conclusions in Chapter 8, the differences in perspectives are striking. Implicit in these conclusions are the changes in how I view secondary school leadership. Although I "lived" the experiences that were catalytic to these changes, I am wondrous at how subtly they occurred and am reminded of Sergiovanni's explanation of why new ways of seeing are often so "hard to accept. Our mindscapes," he cautioned, "trap us into thinking and believing in certain ways" (1996, pp. 8-9).

Educative Authenticity

Implicit in the findings and conclusions included in Chapter 8 are the perceptions and understandings of the 41 parents, students, and staff members from the two schools involved in this study. The member checks conducted throughout the conduct of this study assisted in confirming that these findings and conclusions were "fair" and resonant with what these respondents perceived to be "real" at the time they participated. With the understanding that I have gained through their perceptions of experiences and events, my own "reality" has been altered; my construction of the leadership phenomenon has been reshaped. The findings, conclusions, and working hypotheses reflect the perceptions of the 41 respondents and correspond, to a large extent, with my "current reality."

Catalytic Authenticity

When I took an educational leave over two years ago, I was prompted to undertake this study of leadership by changes that were occurring within public education. Mandated reform initiatives prompted me to question current models of educational leadership and the goals of secondary education. This study has already "stimulated to action" in the way that it has caused me to reshape my "mindscape."

Now, more than ever before, I am aware of the profound questioning occurring within our society; questioning that goes beyond our preoccupation with learning the values that will allow us to compete in the corporate market place;

questioning that goes beyond concern about the globalization of economies and the disappearance of nation states. I am aware of the profound questioning that addresses our very essence as individuals who share the human condition. "IS JESUS REALLY GOD?" is the question that appears on the cover of a recent issue of *Maclean's* magazine. It is accompanied by an image of the Man who, for generations of people, has embodied spirituality and idealized "leadership" (Dredger, 1997). "WAS DEMOCRACY JUST A MOMENT?" questions Kaplan from the front cover the *The Atlantic Monthly*, where caricatures of history's most recognizable leaders parade aimlessly in single file, staring vacuously ahead (Kaplan, 1997). I cannot ignore the questions or the changes in my mindscape that have occurred through the experience of having conducted this investigation of leadership. Through this experience, I have become what Glaser called, "theoretically sensitive" (1978, p. 32).

Now, more than ever before, I am compelled to address questions I believe to be fundamental to those with whom I share the human condition. Now, when I am invited to make presentations to educators or prepare an academic paper on secondary school leadership, I ask: What are/should be our aims for secondary school education within a democratic society? What kind of leadership is required to achieve those aims? In addressing these questions, I am compelled to fuel the dialogue with illustrations from current writings which, I believe, provoke thought and are catalysts for action (i.e., Capra, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Freire, 1994; Goodlad, 1997; Hargreaves, 1997; Lambert et al., 1996; Putnam, 1995; Saul, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1996; Starratt, 1993; Sizer, 1996; Wheatley, 1992).

Tactical Authenticity

In writing the above, I am reminded of Sergiovanni's (1996) allusion to Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, used to caution about the possible impact of sharing new conceptions with others:

> In the *Republic*, Plato explored the idea of being a captive of one's mindscapes in the famous allegory of the cave. Imagine being one of many living in a cave, chained in place so that you cannot move. At the opening of the cave, a large fire casts shadows of people onto the walls. You and the other cave dwellers believe the shadows to be real. You give them names, and talk to them. In Plato's allegory, one of the dwellers is allowed to leave and venture into the real world. Suppose you are this person, and now you must return to the cave. You understand that the shadows are a mere reflection of a more complex reality. You try to share your new mindscape of the world with your fellow cave dwellers, but they do not believe you. Indeed, they find your new views threatening. They turn inward even further to preserve the familiar. Having rejected your views, they begin to reject you.

> If you are strong willed, you manage to hold your own against the force of group norms. But there is a good chance that over time you will come to see the shadows of the cave once again in the old way.
> (pp. 8-9)

As I prepare to return to the secondary school which I left more than two years ago, these words evoke concern. When I share my new mindscape on leadership with "fellow cave dwellers," my hope is that they will not become threatened, for I can never "come to see the shadows of the cave in the old way."

My greatest hope, however, is that among those who read this study there will be some for whom this perspective on secondary school leadership will be "a piece of the puzzle" (Merriam, 1988, p. 61). Not an answer in and of itself, but rather a catalyst in the construction of new mindscapes of leadership that are capable of sustaining hope in the on-going individual and collective struggle to become "more fully human" (Freire, 1994).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

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Dean, Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg

Second Vice-President
Second vice-président
Dr. Edna Turpin-Downey
Assistant Deputy Minister
Department of Education
St. John's

Past President
Président sortant
Richard A. (Dick) Dodds
President
Dodds Associates
Toronto

Executive Director
Directeur général
Robert E. Blair

Dear Sir/Madam:

The Canadian Education Association is beginning a major research project to study a limited number of particularly successful secondary schools across Canada. The emphasis will be on documenting what is working well and on describing successful learning environments for students, especially students at risk of dropping out of school.

The project has the support of a variety of agencies and institutions including provincial and territorial departments/ministries of education as well as key national associations. A design team of nine reseachers from across Canada has been formed to coordinate the research.

Some-key elements of the project:

- Identification of a number of secondary schools which offer particularly successful learning environments for students;
- Selection of a limited sample of these schools, taking into account such factors as: geographic distribution, urban-rural, large-small, traditional-innovative, diverse clientele, etc.;

...2

- Conducting case studies of these schools to identify structures and practices which appear to contribute to success;
- Preparation of a series of reports and publications which will disseminate information about successful practices and may influence policy decisions;
- Completion of the project by Summer of 1994.

Your assistance is requested in the initial identification of one or more especially successful secondary schools that you know; they need not be within your jurisdiction, or associated with your organization or necessarily located in your community or region. You will find enclosed a nomination form which you may use; please duplicate it if necessary and use a separate form for each school you wish to nominate.

To qualify, a nominated school must be a secondary school, that is, one which, regardless of grade range, offers at least the last grade of secondary education (i.e. the grade from which students normally graduate; grade 12 in most provinces, grade 11 in Quebec). An entire school must be nominated, not an individual class, program or unit within a school.

We are interested in what you consider to be a successful school. Therefore, we are not defining a set of specific criteria for what constitutes a successful school. However, you may wish to consider such factors as good reputation, student accomplishment, low dropout rates, success in meeting challenges, success in responding to a diversity of student needs, or success with particular populations such as First Nations students.

You are invited to make as many nominations as you wish. Schools will be selected for study on the basis of nominations, the need for a sample of diverse institutions, and the willingness of schools to participate.

As the design team is working on a tight schedule, all nominations must be received by mail or fax at the offices of the Canadian Education Association in Toronto by FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 1993.

Your cooperation is very much appreciated in what we believe will be an exciting and valuable study of Canadian education.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Fleck

W.E. Patrick Fleck
Director, Exemplary Schools Project

PF/bf

CEA EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS PROJECT

I/We nominate the following school for consideration in the EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS PROJECT:

Name of School: ____________________

School Board/District/Band Council: ____________________

Address of School: ____________________

____

Telephone: ( ) ____________________ Name of Principal: ____________________

Please indicate as precisely as possible the reason or reasons why you consider this school to be a **particularly successful learning environment** for students

Approximate student enrolment: __________ Grade range taught: ______________________

Briefly provide any information you can on the student population:

Briefly provide any information you can on the school's programme:

Your Name: ____

Organization: ____

Address: ____

____

Telephone: ( ) ____________________ Fax: ( ) ____________________

. Thank You.

Please return before June 11 to:

Mr. Patrick Fleck
Canadian Education Association
252 Bloor St. W., Suite 8-200
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V5
Tel: (416) 924-7721 Fax: (416) 924-3188

APPENDIX B

FIRST SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me about your school.
(Prompt): What makes it special?

2. Tell me about the "rules" in your school.
(Prompt): Why were these "rules" created? Who was involved in making these "rules"?
(Prompt): How are these "rules" carried out?
(Prompt): In your opinion, how effective are these "rules"? How important are these "rules"?

3. Tell me about some of the issues in your school.
(Prompt): What were the circumstances that gave rise to these issues?
(Prompt): How are these issues being addressed?
(Prompt): In your opinion, are these issues being dealt with an appropriate way? Explain.

4. Tell me about other issues that have arisen in the past.
(Prompt): What were the circumstances that gave rise to these issues?
(Prompt): How were they addressed?
(Prompt): In your opinion, were these issues dealt with in an appropriate way? Explain.

5. Tell me about some of the activities planned for this year.
(Prompt): Are these activities the same as in other years? If not, where did the idea for these activities come from?
(Prompt): For the activities that are the same as in other years, do you know where the original idea for the activities came from, the "history" of the activities?

6. I would like to include as many different perspectives as possible in my study of your school. In your opinion who are the people (i.e., students, staff, parents) to whom I should talk in order to get as complete a description of the school as possible?

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLE OF SECOND INTERVIEW GUIDE

Student Respondent from Evergreen Community High School

1) Choosing the alternative school: "That I could have an environment to grow in and be part of."

Prompt: Tell me about your experiences in your previous high school?

2) Description of school atmosphere and relationships: "I feel a real emotional attachment to the school. I think that everyone does work together and that people will listen to what you have to say. I think that that is really important because the teachers will listen to what you will say. It's not like the teachers are the authority and the students have to listen to what they say and do as they are told. The teachers respect us. I think that that is the key to it all is that there is mutual respect going on.

It's also leaving the whole feeling and the whole community. I don't know if I will find this again. In a different form I am sure, but I am also really glad that I have had this experience. There's something in the air, or there is some kind of energy here that is just. . . I can't really describe it. It feels like home kind of. When you walk in. I wrote in one of my exams I wrote why I would be so sad to leave here. I guess that there is no fear here of being ostracized or being oppressed or being criticized. . . well you can be criticized in a positive way you know. It's just a space to really be yourself."

Prompt: Tell me more about creating a space for yourself at Evergreen. How did you go about doing that when you first arrived? How have others created spaces?

3) Gender differences: "I find my attitude different in the philosophy class than it is in Women in Lit. I am thinking "What will the men think if I say this?" I am more. . . I don't think that I am as open. I think that. . .There are a lot of intelligent people and "hard-edged" kind of guys in the class who are very serious studiers. I am always worried and think, "What if what I say doesn't make any sense?" I think a lot of women do that."

Prompt: Tell me more about how you deal with gender differences here at Evergreen?

4) Attitude toward others and how decisions are made: "We are not going to persecute you. We are a community and if you have a problem then we are here to help you. I think that we are really fair because we all come to a consensus. We get to a consensus. We don't just leave it. We really work at it hard. We try to be fair."

Prompt: Do you think that other students feel the same way about decisions made by CEASA? Examples?

APPENDIX D

ANNOUNCEMENT IN RIVERVIEW SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

September 27, 1996.

Dear Parents and Students,

My name is Rosemary Foster and I am a doctoral student in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. As part of my doctoral program, I am conducting a research study on Leadership in Two Secondary Schools With a Reputation for Success. I believe that by bringing together the perspectives of parents, students, teachers, and administrators, my study has the potential to provide practical insights into how we can make all of our high schools the best possible learning environments for young people.

During this study I will be talking to parents, students, teachers, and principals within two schools that have the reputation of being "successful."

I initially asked (principal's name) about involving Riverview School because of its reputation for success. After visiting the school, I can understand why your school has its excellent reputation. The selection of the second school for this study will be based on its positive reputation within the community it serves.

I look forward to meeting and talking with parents and students, and will be in and around the school between September 30 and November 15, 1996. The final written report based on this study will be completed by next fall. At that time, I will be available to speak with interested parents and students.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in this endeavor. It is my hope that Riverview School's involvement in this study will be a positive and rewarding experience for everyone. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at the school, or through (principal's name).

Sincerely,

Rosemary Foster

APPENDIX E

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS OF UNDERAGE PARTICIPANTS

Telephone Conversation Requesting Permission to Involve Underage Participant

My name is Rosemary Foster and I am a doctoral student in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. I am on leave from my position as a high school assistant principal in St. Albert, where I have been employed for the past 16 years. As part of my doctoral program, I am conducting a research study on leadership in secondary schools with a reputation for success. During this period of reform where the emphasis in education is on performance and quality, I would like to conduct a study that contributes to the practical as well as theoretical understanding of the role of student, parent, and staff leadership in creating a "successful" high school. Much of the research literature on effective schools to date, focuses on the perceptions of school-based and school district educators. I believe that by bringing together the perspectives of parents, students, teachers, and administrators, my study has the potential to provide practical insights into how we can make all of our high schools the best possible learning environments for young people.

For this study, I will be talking to parents, students, teachers, and principals within two schools that have the reputation of being "successful" Specifically, I will be speaking to individuals who are knowledgeable about the school and have been involved in school activities. My study is descriptive, and will be based on the data I obtain from interviewing, making observations of school life, and examining relevant school documents. The interviews will consist of open-ended questions.

I have chosen your child's school as a site for this study based on its excellent reputation. I would like to include your son/daughter in the interviews as I understand that he/she is a knowledgeable and contributing member within this school community.

Every effort would be made to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. With your permission, I would like to interview your son/daughter and ask him/her why Riverview is a good school, and what is the role of leadership in making it a place where students can be successful. The initial interview would be about thirty to forty minutes in length at which time I would explain the project. I would meet with him/her once again to allow for a review of the first interview and in order to ask and answer any questions which have arisen from the first interview. I would like to use a tape recorder so that the interview could be typed and reviewed and edited by your son/daughter before I analyze its content. Names would be changed to protect the identity of your son/daughter.

If you agree, I will be forwarding you a letter and request that you provide written consent for me to talk with your son/daughter. I would like to meet with him/her at the school or at your home in the next two weeks, whichever is most convenient for you. The two meetings with your son/daughter will take place in the next two to three weeks.

If you would be interested in reading or discussing this study when I have finished, I would be pleased to contact you at that time. This completed Ph.D. dissertation will be placed in the education library at the University of Alberta and in the provincial library of the Alberta Teachers' Association. A copy will also be offered to your school district as a thank you for its participation in this study.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Riverview School:
Request for Written Consent

October, 1996.

Dear Mr. and/or Mrs./Ms. _____________,

Further to our telephone conversation, I have enclosed a copy of the ethics review form for this study which was submitted and approved by the Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta.

A copy of the final study will be made available to you when it has been completed August. I will also be available to answer any questions that you might have at that time. Copies will also be given to the three school boards who have participated. A copy will be placed in the education library at the University of Alberta as well as the provincial Alberta Teachers' Association library.

Thank you for considering my request to involve _________ in this study. If you have questions, please contact me at my home (collect 458-2166). If at this time you are prepared to give written consent to have ___________ participate, please sign below and return to me.

Sincerely yours,

Rosemary Foster
86 Pembroke Cr.
St. Albert, AB.
T8N 4S5

- -

I, ______________________ give permission to Rosemary Foster to interview my daughter/son, ____________________ on two occasions for the purpose of this study on *Leadership In Secondary School With the Reputation for Success.*

________________________ (signature)

______________________ (date)

Evergreen School:
Request for Written Consent

November, 1996.

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Albert in Edmonton. As part of my doctoral program , I am conducting a research study on leadership in secondary schools with a reputation for success. I am investigating the relationship between leadership and school culture. During this study, I will be talking to parents, students, and staff members from Evergreen Community High School and from one other secondary school in Alberta.

I would like to invite your son/daughter to participate. I will be conducting interviews over the next five weeks and am looking to involve approximately eight students from the school. I will be asking them a questions which focus on each student's experience and perceptions of the day-to-day routines of the school, as well as the issues. Your child's responses will not be identifiable in the final report. I will not be using any information from the school records.

This study has been approved by your Board of Education's Research Review Committee and by the principal. By bringing together perspectives of parents, students, and staff members, I hope through this study to be able to provide practical knowledge about high schools, like Evergreen, that provide positive learning environments for young people. When the study has been completed, a report on the findings will be available to all who are interested.

If you wish to give permission for your child to be included in this study, please complete the form at the bottom of this letter and return it to your son's/daughter's teacher at your earliest convenience. Participation is voluntary. Your son/daughter may withdraw at any point in time.

I appreciate your cooperation and support in this endeavor. Please contact me with questions/concerns.

Thank you,
Rosemary Foster, University of Alberta
416-323-7386 (Toronto)
403-458-2166 (Alberta)

STUDENT'S NAME: ________________________________

____ I give permission for my child to participate in the University of Alberta study being conducted by Rosemary Foster

____ I DO NOT give permission.

Signature of parent/guardian: ______________________________

APPENDIX F

EXCERPT FROM ANNOTATED SUMMARY OF FIELD NOTES FROM EVERGREEN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL (AUDIT TRAIL)

November, 1996.

My first full day at Evergreen and I see the "community in action" as students gather to discuss if and how they should respond to the government's discussion paper on secondary education reform. This group of students and teachers have seized the importance of the underlying assumptions. They don't accept that there is "something wrong" that can be fixed by cutting back spending and putting pressure on teachers and students to "tighten up the purse strings" and "pull themselves up by their bootstraps." This is an excellent meeting where students talk and are heard as much as teachers and principal. Everyone calls one another by their first name. I wonder if that has anything to do with "leveling the playing field?"

The teachers are proud of the students and the school. Liz tells me that 1/3 to 1/2 of the students attending the school have at some point in their academic career been identified as gifted. Doug says that only 1/3 spend their three years of high school at Evergreen. All of the students have come from another high school. Many transfer in during their grade 11 or 12 year. One student representative on the Board of Directors is in her third year at Evergreen; the other in her second. The governance model for the school is fascinating. The community structure is modeled on democratic principles. All seem to be quite comfortable with the consultative and consensus models used for decision making. Staff and students are elected to serve on the various governing bodies including CEASA. CEASA, I learned today, is the problem solving body, as well as the admission board. Any problems that cannot be solved by CEASA are referred to the Board of Directors. Doug (the principal) assumes a low key role in all of this. Interesting.

Arnold has volunteered to be interviewed. As long time staff member, his perceptions should be informative and a good place to start.

One of the parents at the Board of Directors meeting takes the time to share her perceptions with me. She has had two sons attend Evergreen and speaks of the importance of capturing the "multiple perspectives" and diversity of the school. She works in community health and seems quite informed on issues.

APPENDIX G

FIRST MEMBER CHECK COVER LETTER

October 22, 1996.

Dear _______________,

I have attached a copy of our conversation from last week. When you get a minute, please read through these typewritten pages. Don't worry about the incomplete sentences, ums and ahs. Please make changes where you feel they are needed. You may, for example, want to add some thoughts or take some out. You may want to note questions or topics for further discussion.

Please write on this copy. I am the only one who will see these transcriptions as I am doing all of the typing and revisions. Anything you write is confidential.

Could we meet briefly in the next few days? I would like to hear your questions and comments at that time. I will also collect the edited copy of our first conversation from you at that time. We can talk about a convenient time for this meeting later today.

Thanks for your help and your time,

Rosemary Foster
403-458-2166

APPENDIX H

SECOND MEMBER CHECK COVER LETTERS

Cover Letter to Respondents in Riverview School

March 13, 1997.

Dear __________,

Attached is a copy of the Riverview School case study which will form one of the data chapters of my final written dissertation. Before I analyze the Riverview case and write specifically about leadership within your school, I once again require your help:

- I've given you all pseudonyms. Your pseudonym in the Riverview School Case Study is: ____________________________
  I hope that this name is suitable. If you would like to change your pseudonym, please suggest a different name and I will make appropriate changes to the finished copy.

- Please check all instances in the case study where I have quoted you. Make comments including additions and deletions by writing directly on the copy of the Riverview School Case Study.

- Please note any other questions or concerns on the copy.

- I need all of these draft copies of the case study returned for editing and changes. When you have finished reading and editing, please return your draft copy in the envelope that has been provided.

I will be back after Spring Break to speak with people and answer all questions. If you would like to contact me before then, please call me collect at: 403-458-2166.

Thanks again for all of your help. Have a great Spring Break!

Rosemary Foster

Cover Letter to Respondents at
Evergreen Community High School

May 6, 1997.

Dear ________________,

Attached is a copy of the Evergreen Community High School case study which will become one of the data chapters in my dissertation.

Before I analyze the case and talk specifically about leadership within your schools, I once again require your help:

- I have given each of you pseudonyms. Your pseudonym is: ______________
  If you would like me to use a different name, please write your selected name below and I will make that change in the final version of this chapter:

- Please check where I have quoted you. You will notice that in some cases I have made changes from the original interview transcription. These changes were made to enhance clarity when moving from the oral to written language. You may still want to make further changes. MAKE ALL ADDITIONS/DELETIONS AND CHANGES BY WRITING DIRECTLY ON THIS COPY.
  Please return your edited copy to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope that I have enclosed.

- Please return the enclosed draft, with or without changes. I will be writing the analysis of leadership using this case study as my "synthesis" of the data and wish to make sure that all changes you feel should be made, are incorporated before conducting that analysis.

If you have questions, comments, or concerns that you would like to discuss with me, I can be reached at home in the evenings at 403-458-2166. Please call collect.

If you prefer "cyber space," my e-mail address is: ryfoster@pop.srv.ualberta.ca

Thanks again for all of your help,

Rosemary Foster

APPENDIX I

THIRD MEMBER CHECK COVER LETTERS

Sample Cover Letter to Teacher Respondent

October 29, 1997.

Hi ___________,

I have been thinking a lot about you and your colleagues lately with all that is going on in Ontario. We all admire you and cannot help but wonder how different our last few years would have been had we decided to "march" as you have.

On October 4 of this year, we did "march" on the provincial legislature. Calgary teachers are continuing their demonstrations and work to rule. Our parents and students are getting into the act now and the government is listening.

I hesitate to involve you in this final set of member checks during this very difficult time, but have set my goal for dissertation completion for January, 1998. Would you be able to read over the revised case report and the analysis piece? When you have finished, could you return all draft copies in the self-addressed envelope that has been enclosed? Thanks again for your support.

I think about you all and wish you well during this challenging time in Ontario education/schooling.

Take care,

Rosemary Foster
86 Pembroke Cr.
St. Albert, AB
T8N 4S5
403-458-2166

Sample Cover Letter to Student Respondent

October 29, 1997.

Hi Robin,

How are you doing? I am in the process of completing my dissertation and require a student to look at/comment on the analysis piece which I wrote to accompany the "Evergreen" story.

I've enclosed the revised case study, "Evergreen Community High School." The 22 respondents (yourself included) suggested a few changes, but those were minimal. It is very close to what you read in May. The analysis piece contains references to the research literature and my own interpretations of leadership at Evergreen. If you have time, could you read, make comments and return all changes/additions/deletions to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope which I have included?

Thanks for becoming involved in my study. I learned a lot of ideas at Evergreen and enjoyed meeting you all.

Take care,

Rosemary Foster
86 Pembroke Cr.
St. Albert, AB
T8N 4S5
403-458-2166

Sample Cover Letter to Parent Respondent

September 8, 1997.

Mrs. ____________,

I spoke with your husband this morning and let him know that I would be forwarding this package to you.

As part of the "finishing" touches of my doctoral study of Riverview School, I would like to ask select participants to read and respond to the analysis based on the "story." You will notice that there are a few changes from the original draft. The name of the school has been changed to "Riverview School."

I've enclosed the revised story of Riverview School and a copy of the analysis/interpretation. In the next couple of week's I am requesting that you review the analysis and write and comment/concerns/suggestions right on the copy which you have. When you have had time to do that, would you please return both the story and analysis to me in the self-addressed envelope which I have enclosed?

Thanks again for your interest and time. When the dissertation has been completed, I will make a copy available for you and all of the others who have given so generously of their time and support.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Foster
86 Pembroke Cr.
St. Albert, AB
T8N 4S5
458-2166

ROSEMARY FOSTER

86 Pembroke Crescent • St. Albert, AB T8N 4S5 • 458-2166 • ryfoster@pop.srv.ualberta.ca

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Ph.D. in Educational Administration *1998*
Dissertation Topic: *Leadership In Two Secondary Schools With a Reputation for Success*

MCGILL UNIVERSITY
Doctoral Studies *July 1993 and July 1994*

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Master in Educational Administration *1992*
Research Project: *The French Immersion Choice at High School—Students' and Parents' Perspectives*

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC
Certificat en sciences de l'éducation *1978*
Majors: lettres françaises, secondary education

YORK UNIVERSITY (GLENDON COLLEGE) TORONTO
B.A. (Bilingual) *1976*
Majors: français, English, Canadian Studies

UNIVERSITÉ DE LILLE, FRANCE
Baccalauréat ès arts (partial) *February 1974 – June 1974*

BANFF SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
Cours universitaire d'immersion française *July 1972 – August 1972*

CAREER EXPERIENCE

PAUL KANE HIGH SCHOOL, ST. ALBERT, ALBERTA *Present – August 1998*
Principal, Paul Kane High School Summer Program *April 1997 – August 1997*
April 1996 – August 1996

Responsibilities: Plan, organize, publicize and administer summer school program offered at Paul Kane; budgeting, student discipline, hiring and supervision of staff. Implementing in 1998 a transitional program for students moving from junior to senior high. Implemented in 1997 Federal Government ISE Computer Camp (Information Highway, Science and Entrepreneurship).

English Teacher, grades 11–12
Temporary assignment replacing teacher on medical leave *February – June 1998*
Participant in forum creating *Western Canadian Protocol Common Curriculum Framework* for English Language Arts.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
Research Assistant to Dr. Maynes: Canadian Educational Poverty Programs
1996 – present
(SSHRC Research Grant);
Curriculum Development: M.Ed. Principalship Simulation Program *1996 – 1997*
Instructor: Educational Field Experiences Practicum 151—Introduction to thd*995 – 1996*
Study of Teaching; Educational Administration 401—The Role of the Teacher

ALBERTA EDUCATION DIPLOMA EXAMINATION VALIDATION AND STANDARDS CONFIRMATION
Consulting Practitioner, English 30 *1995 – 1996*

PAUL KANE HIGH SCHOOL, ST. ALBERT, ALBERTA
Assistant Principal *1993 – 1995*
Responsibilities: Principal designate. Shared responsibility for hiring staff, teacher supervision and evaluation, student discipline, monitoring *at-risk* students with focus on student retention, staff/student morale, professional staff development, student extra-curricular activities. Administrator responsible for building maintenance, school inventory, custodial staff supervision and administration of Alberta Education Diploma Examinations. French Immersion Administrator responsible for supervision of bilingual staff, students, student program, communication, public relations, and District Office liaison.

Department Head of French Immersion *1993 – 1995*
Responsibilities: coordination of the French Immersion program: budgeting, hiring and supervising of staff, implementation of curriculum.

Curriculum Coordinator *1992 – 1993*
Responsibilities: curriculum development, implementation and assessment; coordinated school technology plan including purchase of computers and inservicing staff; organized Teacher Effectiveness Program and the co-operative learning initiatives within the school.
Lead Instructor: involved in coordination and implementation of *Project Tomorrow*, a transitional program offered by Athabasca University for high school students considering post-secondary study.

Department Head of English and Second Languages *1990 – 1992*
Responsibilities: coordination of the English Language Arts and Second Languages programs; supervision of 13 full-time and part-time members in the department; liaison between administration and department teachers; supervision of student-teacher assigned to department; facilitation of common course outlines and department handbooks.

English and French Teacher, grades 10–12 *1980 – 1996*
Seconded for marking of Alberta Education English 30 Diploma Examinations. Coordinator of international trips, student exchanges, student graduation, student newspaper, and student union.

GEORGES P. VANIER HIGH SCHOOL, MORINVILLE, ALBERTA
English and French Teacher *1978 – 1980*
English and French/français secondary, academic and non-academic courses. Responsible for extra-curricular activities including graduation.

UNIVERSITY OF QUEBEC, CHICOUTIMI, QUEBEC *1976 – 1978*
Sessional Lecturer and Instructor: Teaching English As a Second Language; Modern English Grammar and Translation, English Linguistics

AWARDS

IZAAK WALTON KILLAM MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP	*1996 – 1998*
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP (honourary)	*1996 – 1997*
F.J.C. SEYMOUR FELLOWSHIP —Alberta Teachers' Association	*1995 – 1996*
MARY LOUISE IMRIE SCHOLARSHIP	*1996*
ASCD EDUCATIONAL SUCCESSES IN ALBERTA AWARD	*1995*
ALBERTA EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD	*1992*
SECRETARY OF STATE SECOND-LANGUAGE MONITORSHIP, Université du Québec	*1976 – 1978*
SECRETARY OF STATE SECOND-LANGUAGE BURSARY, Université du Québec	*1975 – 1976*
FRIENDS OF GLENDON SCHOLARSHIP, YORK UNIVERSITY, TORONTO	*1974 – 1975*
PRIX D'EXCELLENCE, BANFF SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS	*1972*
GRADE 13 ONTARIO SCHOLARSHIP	*1972*
WELLINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP	*1972*

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA CHAPTER OF THE PHI DELTA KAPPA FRATERNITY

President	*1997 – present*
President-elect	*1996 – 1997*
Vice-President of Program	*1994 – 1996*

ATA Council of School Administration *1995 – present*
Co-Director, *1999 Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference*
Program member, *1997 Western Canadian Educational Administrators' Conference*

Executive Membership in ATA Provincial Teachers' Convention Association
Past-President *1992 – 1993*
President *1990 – 1992*
Vice-President, Program *1988 – 1990*

Membership in American Educational Research Association *1995 – present*

Membership in Canadian Society for the Study of Education *1997 – present*

Memberships in ATA Specialists' Councils *1978 – present*

ATA Local Involvement *1978 – 1993*

Conference Presentations

Canadian Society for the Study of Education Annual Conference, Ottawa
Graduates of a French Immersion Program
Canadian Educational Poverty Programs *May 1998*

American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, San Diego
Leadership in Secondary Schools With the Reputation for Success
Graduates of a French Immersion Secondary School Program *April 1998*

University of Alberta, Department of Educational Policy Studies
Leadership in Secondary Schools With the Reputation for Success *November 1997*

American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago
Leadership in Exemplary Secondary Schools
Successful French Immersion Secondary School Students *March 1997*

University of Alberta, Department of Educational Policy Studies
Professional Development, Teacher Supervision and Teacher Evaluation *February 1997*

North East Teachers' Convention Association
Building and Maintaining a Successful French Immersion High School Program *February 1997*

Edmonton Public School Board
Leadership in Successful Secondary Schools *January 1997*

Canadian Parents for French Alberta Provincial Conference, Leduc
Building and Maintaining Our French Immersion High School Programs—Role of Parents and Educators *April 1996*

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PRINCIPALS NATIONAL CONFERENCE, REGINA
Building Community in High School *April 1996*

U.C.E.A. 17th Annual Graduate Research Seminar, New York
Shared Leadership in Exemplary Secondary School Communities *April 1996*

GREATER EDMONTON TEACHERS' CONVENTION
Building and Maintaining Our French Immersion Programs in High Schools *February 1995*

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF IMMERSION TEACHERS' CONFERENCE, EDMONTON
Successful French Immersion Programs—A Research-Based Approach *October 1994*

RED DEER REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE
Building the Public Image of Your High School *October 1994*

NORTH CENTRAL TEACHERS' CONVENTION, EDMONTON
A Team Approach to Site-Based Professional Development *February 1994*

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